

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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"Late Show" host David Letterman

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SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2005

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# DOD officials want new early retirement rules

Proposals aimed at military personnel with 20-plus years

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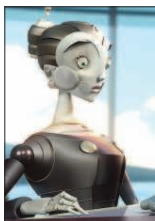
## Not your typical bargain basement

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U.S. troops search through DVDs at a local bazaar at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. The bazaar is held on the base every Friday and features DVDs, scarves, carpets, clothes, crafts, old coins and interesting helmets (right).

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

## STARS &amp; STRIPES

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Scene on Sunday

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## News Tracker ... What's new with old news

## Military

**Air Force's Predator squadron:** The Air Force plans to enlist the New York Air National Guard to operate one of its unmanned aerial vehicle squadrons, Gov. George Pataki announced Thursday.

It's part of an Air Force initiative that could expand the Predator program to as many as 15 squadrons by 2010. Pataki's statement didn't disclose the location of New York's Predator station.

**Navy sonar and whales:** Sonar pulsing from a Navy guided-missile destroyer during training exercises near the San Juan Islands near Seattle two years ago was likely loud enough to send killer whales fleeing, according to a government agency report.

The National Marine Fisheries Service report backed up local experts who said sonar from the USS Shoup caused a group of orcas to behave abnormally, apparently trying to avoid the sound.

It contradicts the Navy's previous findings that orcas in Puget Sound's J Pod seemed unaffected by the sonar coming from the Shoup on May 5, 2003.

## States

**Holocaust families' treasures:** A federal judge in Miami tentatively approved a \$25.5 million settlement of claims that U.S. troops plundered the riches of Hungarian Holocaust families from a Nazi train.

U.S. District Judge Patricia Seitz called the participants "peacekeepers" and said the settlement gives the government "the opportunity to step up to correct an injustice that may have occurred 60 years ago."

Until the settlement, reached last week and accepted Thursday by Seitz, the Claims Conference on Holocaust issues will oversee distribution of the settlement money to needy Hungarian survivors.

**Detroit terror suspect:** An immigrant who was once tried on terrorism charges in a case marred by prosecutorial misconduct planned to plead guilty next week to unrelated insurance fraud charges and be deported, his lawyer said.

Almer Haman, 36, of Detroit is tired of fighting the legal system, defense lawyer James Thomas said Thursday.

"After coming to court for five bond hearings and not being able to obtain a bond — and after having been assaulted by another inmate at Wayne County Jail and losing his front teeth — he decided that continuing the legal battle wasn't worth it anymore and he wants to go home," Thomas told the Detroit Free Press.

**Wisconsin hotel shooting:** A man who fatally shot seven fellow church members and then killed himself at a church meeting in a Brookfield, Wis., hotel had a history of depression and disagreed with his pastor, his mother told a medical examiner.

Shirley Ratzmann said her 44-year-old son, Terry Ratzmann, had a history of depression "relating to job problems for the last couple of years," but had not seen a doctor about it, a medical examiner's report released Thursday shows.

Ratzmann also said the Living Church of God congregation her son attended had split from another church a few years ago.

"She stated that her son did not agree with the church's point of view, but 'didn't harp on it,'" the report said.

**Immigrant smuggling deaths:** Some of the charges against a truck driver accused in a deadly smuggling attempt could be dropped after a judge in Houston said prosecutors failed to show he was guilty of charges of harboring illegal immigrants.

U.S. District Judge John G. Alving on Thursday stopped short of throwing out 19



**Pacifist nuns:** From left, Ardeth Platte, Carol Gilbert and Jackie Hudson, Dominican nuns from Grand Rapids, Mich., listen to speakers addressing a crowd outside the federal courthouse in downtown Denver in July 2003. A federal appeals court upheld the prison sentences Thursday for the three pacifist nuns accused of using their blood to deface a missile site in northern Colorado in 2002. The 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals noted the potential benefit of civil disobedience, but upheld a jury's decision to convict the nuns on charges of obstructing national defense and damaging government property.

charges against Tyrone Williams, but asked prosecutors and defense attorneys to submit arguments.

Williams, 34, still faces 39 other charges including conspiracy to harbor, conceal and transport illegal immigrants and transporting immigrants in a manner that resulted in serious injury and death.

**Yucca Mountain nuclear waste:** E. mails from a government hydrologist to his supervisor, copied to several co-workers, led the Energy Department to believe that documents on the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste dump might have been falsified, government officials said.

The documents concerned 6-year-old U.S. Geological Survey studies of water movement in the planned Nevada dump. USGS scientists validated Energy Department conclusions that water seepage was relatively slow, so radiation would be less likely to escape.

Other studies have pointed to faster water movement. If it turns out there was document falsification and it casts doubt on USGS' conclusions, that could undercut the Energy Department's case for Yucca.

**White House van threat:** A man who threatened to blow up his van near the White House during inauguration week pleaded guilty Thursday to making a false explosive threat.

Lowell Timmers, 54, of Cedar Springs, Mich., entered the plea in U.S. District Court as part of a deal for a reduced sentence, federal prosecutors said. District Judge Emmett G. Sullivan must still decide whether to accept the agreement for Timmers to serve two years and 10 months in prison. He will be sentenced June 30.

Timmers' threats brought traffic near the White House to a standstill for more than 4½ hours on Jan. 18.

## Business

**Immigrants at Wal-Mart:** Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer, has agreed to pay \$1.1 million to settle federal allegations it used hundreds of illegal immigrants to clean its stores, authorities said Friday.

Additionally, 12 businesses that provided contract janitor services to Wal-Mart will pay \$4 million in fines and plead guilty to criminal immigration charges, officials said.

The case against Wal-Mart marks a record dollar amount for a civil immigration settlement, said Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Michael J. Garcia, director of

Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

## World

**Madrid terror suspects:** Spanish police on Friday arrested a Syrian in Madrid who they believe helped recruit radical Islamists to be sent abroad and had ties with suspects charged in the Madrid train bombings of a year ago.

Police, who gave the suspect's name as Mohammad Almallah Dabas, said he was arrested at his home in Madrid as part of the investigation being carried out by the National Court. The Interior Ministry said he and his brother used an apartment in Madrid to house recruits or people passing through. They were assisted by Basel Ghalyoun, a Syrian ally jailed for his suspected role in the March 11, 2004, bombings, the ministry said.

**Bobby Fischer's citizenship:** American chess genius Bobby Fischer, detained in Japan and awaiting deportation to the United States, cleared another hurdle Friday in his bid for Icelandic citizenship after a parliamentary committee granted initial approval.

The motion to grant Fischer citizenship will go before Iceland's 63-member parliament for final approval on Monday, said a member of the General Committee.

Fischer, 62, has been detained in Japan awaiting deportation to the United States.

**Prince Charles's wedding:** The blessing ceremony following the civil marriage of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles will be shown live on television, the prince's Clarence House office said Friday.

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams is to lead the blessing at Windsor Castle following a civil wedding service at Windsor town hall April 8.

The civil service will not be shown on TV, Clarence House said.



Prince Charles

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

# Big Red One spending Iraq dollars fast

## Soldiers back from war pouring into Würzburg stores

BY BEN MURRAY  
Stars and Stripes

WÜRZBURG, Germany — At the on-post Würzburg Furniture Store, branch manager Roger Woods has noticed a trend: He's selling everything he has.

"Bedroom sets, mattresses and box springs," he said, looking around the showroom for specifics, and giving up. "Basically everything."

As one of the Würzburg-area businesses caught up in the tide of commerce that has rolled in with the return of thousands of 1st Infantry Division troops over the past month, Woods' store has been an indicator of the type of spending the soldiers are doing.

Woods said he's been moving a lot of large TV stands — because soldiers need a place to put their new big-screen and plasma sets — and doing a brisk business in delivering TVs to their new owners.

"We average probably two, three big screens being delivered a day," he said.

Of course, with a new TV, a soldier will also need a coffee table for the remote and a place to sit — perhaps explaining the run on Italian leather couch sets the store has sold.

And desks are a hot item, he said.

"Because everybody's getting new computers, I guess," Woods said.

From haircuts to Harley's, 1st ID soldiers have been buying, buying, buying as they come back from their downrange deployment, bank accounts flush with hazard pay and incentive money, Würzburg-area business owners said this week.

Sales at Army and Air Force Exchange Service facilities in Würzburg are up 55 percent from the same time last year, according to Robert Koch, retail business manager for the consolidated exchange.

Many of the 12,000 returning soldiers have come back and "figured out they've got \$10,000, \$15,000," said Maj. Simon Teal, who returned with the 67th Combat Support Hospital in January.

Telian, who has bought a Global Positioning System for his car and taken a vacation



BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. Travis Runnels, left, from the 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery, and Cpl. Steve Drefke, from the 1st Infantry Division's headquarters company, shop for high-tech stereo equipment for Runnels' new car at the Leighton Barracks' PowerZone on Thursday.

to Spain, Italy and England since returning, said the higher pay and lack of shopping options downrange mean a fat bank account for many soldiers.

"The money just piles up [in Iraq]. You get paid more and you spend less," Telian said. "Especially with the yearlong deployments."

Over the course of that year, an average single soldier might spend about two months' pay on small expenses and bills, and squirrel the rest away, said Cpl. Steve Drefke, from the 1st ID's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, who returned last month.

That is, they save it until they get back. "People have never had this much money saved up before, and they're buying everything they've ever wanted," said

Drefke, proud owner of a new laptop computer.

For single soldiers, that means "electronics and cars," he said, a point underlined by his shopping partner, Sgt. Travis Runnels, who on Thursday was buying electronics to put in his new car.

The excess money has led some soldiers to buy luxury items just to spend the dough, Runnels said.

But the flood of cash has been a long-expected relief for many of the on- and off-post business owners who cater to troops, and who used words such as "slow" and "survived" to describe the year the soldiers were away.

"It was really rough last year," said Karl Salisbury, an on-post exchange car and motorcycle sales associate. People just weren't buying heavily, and numbers

dipped, he said, a trend also seen outside the gates of Leighton Barracks.

"Last year, you'd be lucky to talk to two or three people a week," said Auto Exchange sales consultant Paul Brennan. "You missed the troops. You knew when they were gone."

But last week, Brennan's lot was teeming with browsers, and all around the post businesses were on the rebound.

"I tell you what, business is booming," Salisbury said. "This month's probably the best month since I've been here," the four-year employee of the dealership said.

The hot item on Salisbury's lot: The new Ford Mustang. Sticker price: around \$25,000.

"I've never seen a vehicle sell so much," Salisbury said.

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# Community Bank to expand services to Italy bases

BY TERRY BOYD  
Stars and Stripes

BAUMHOLTER, Germany — Largely unknown by military personnel outside Germany, Britain, the Department of Defense's banking system is expanding into Italy.

The Overseas Military Banking Program will add six locations in Italy during 2006. Patrick T. Shine, director of military and civilian pay services at the Defense Financial and Accounting Services, said in a telephone interview from his office in Arlington, Va.

Community Bank branches are planned for:

■ Navy sites — Naples, Sigonella, La Maddalena and Sardinia. Naval Support Activity Naples is

home to about 6,500 sailors, their families and civilian employees at three major facilities. About 7,000 military and civilian personnel are based at Naval Air Station Sigonella, on the Italian island of Sicily. About 2,700 Americans are attached to the Naval Support Operation at La Maddalena.

■ Army sites — Caserma Ederle, Vicenza; Camp Darby, Livorno. About 8,000 soldiers are based at Caserma Ederle, 25 miles west of Venice, and hundreds more soldiers and airmen are at Camp Darby, near Pisa.

■ Air Force sites — Aviano Air Base, Aviano. About 7,000 Americans are based at Aviano, north of Venice, which is home base to the 31st Fighter Wing.

Tens of thousands of soldiers,

sailors, Marines, airmen and civilians bank at a total of 100 branches in Germany, Japan or Britain.

DFAS does not select sites for new banks, Shine said. Officials at facilities without Community Banks must request the service and prove there is sufficient potential demand to warrant the expenditure, he said.

Community Bank — government owned, contractor operated — is not a conventional bank offering myriad services to a private banks in the United States competing for market share, he said. Rather, it provides basic U.S.-style banking — checking accounts, savings accounts — for American military personnel living overseas, he said.

Banking services fees don't go

as "profits" to Community Bank or to the civilian bank that runs it, but rather help defray operating expenses.

DFAS oversees the bank, which is operated by San Francisco-based financial services giant Bank of America on a five-year, cost-plus-fixed-fee contract. One of the largest pieces of Community Bank's business is currency exchange.

During 2004, DFAS' internal treasury bought about \$9 billion worth of currency on a world market, averaging about \$34 million per day, according to information provided by Bryan Hubbard, head of DFAS corporate communications.

Finance operations under DFAS provided funds to base disbursing offices in European

Union countries for local-national payroll, vendor payments, currency exchange, as well as to credit unions and European Community Bank operations.

The Army pays 65 percent of the approximately \$4.8 million fee Bank of America gets each month to provide banking services, while the Navy pays 15 percent and the Air Force 20 percent, Shine said.

The half-dozen sailors in Naples asked about the arrival of the facilities furrowed their brows, saying they'd not heard of the bank before.

Some added that with Navy Federal Credit Unions sites and existing places to exchange dollars for euros, new banking facilities aren't necessarily needed.

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# Draft calls for universal early-retirement rules

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Department officials want new early-retirement rules — some incentives and some mandatory exits — for all four services as a long-term tool to help force efficiency.

The request to Congress comes just days after Marine and Army officials announced they missed recruiting goals for February. But Charles Abell, deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said the two issues are not connected.

"These are for force-shaping," Abell told

a House Armed Services subcommittee on Wednesday. "It is not about getting rid of folks. It's about keeping the right folks and right skill and experience mix."

The proposals all are aimed at 20-plus year military personnel, especially those in outdated or overpopulated specialties. They include:

- A buyout bonus or annuity for enlisted members;
- High-year tenure caps for officers, to apply to either certain specialties or across the board;
- An early-retirement board — described by Abell as a "last resort" measure — that would review senior officers' skills

and have the authority to hand out involuntary retirements.

Abell said all four proposals likely aren't needed to achieve the force-shaping goals: If the new high-tenure caps are approved by Congress, the early retirement board would likely be redundant.

And he acknowledged that many of the proposals will be unpopular among career military who would be forced out of their posts.

"This is about the appropriate management of human capital," he said. "And we've found that when you have these authorities out there, people start making their own decisions ahead of time."

"This is just putting more tools in the toolbox," he said.

Abell said all four services have requested the tools, though the Navy and Air Force are more likely to use the authority in the near future.

Air Force officials have pledged to drop their end strength by about 7,000 airmen by June 1, and are scheduled to trim another 2,300 in 2006. Meanwhile, Navy officials plan on reducing their sailor totals by more than 13,000 next year.

Meanwhile, the Marines plan on adding 3,000 more personnel in 2006, and the Army is scheduled to add about 30,000 soldiers over the next several years.

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## 'America, you have a recruiting problem'

Army vice chief of staff says he's worried about the future of all-volunteer military force

BY JON R. ANDERSON

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army's vice chief of staff says the force is losing sleep lately over the future of the all-volunteer force.

"What keeps me awake at night is what this all-volunteer force will look like in 2007," Gen. Richard Cody told lawmakers recently on Capitol Hill. It's a concern others should share, he says.

"I think it ought to keep all of you awake," he told a gathering of reporters Wednesday.

Nearly 31 years since it replaced the draft Army of both world wars, Korea and Vietnam, the all-volunteer force is facing its first real test, Cody said.

"This is the first time we've taken the all-volunteer force into an extended fight," Cody said. "It's not a Kosovo, it's not a Bosnia, it's not a [Multinational Force and Observers peacekeeping mission] in the Sinai," he said. "It is a war. On any given day, we have 156,000 soldiers for 12 months in a combat zone, as well as — still — all those other commitments."

It's a pace that could be crippling, he said.

"I worry about the soldiers with their second and third tour by '07 since 9/11," Cody said.

Indeed, for the first time since Vietnam, the sheer volume of operations means even relatively junior troops are already becoming veterans of multiple combat tours. Soldiers who served as privates in the 3rd Infantry Division as it invaded Iraq, for example, are now returning to Iraq as corporals and sergeants.

The all-volunteer force was born on July 1, 1973, in the wake of years of protest against the draft during the war in Vietnam. Ever since, the Army has traded orders to serve for "Be all you can be" and, more recently, "Army all" advertising campaigns to convince young Americans to raise their right hands and wear the uniform.

But two years into the war in Iraq, recruiting efforts are beginning to show cracks.

For the first two months of the year, both Army and Marine Corps recruiters have failed to meet their quotas to sign up new volunteers.

### Selling service

"That, correctly so, is a concern," Gen. Peter Pace, the vice chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff told Pentagon employees Friday during a town hall meeting.

While he said more recruiters and adver-



REEBA CRITSER/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Gen. Richard A. Cody's two sons, Capt. Clint Cody, left, and Capt. Tyler Cody, both with the 101st Airborne Division, pin four stars on his shoulders at the Pentagon auditorium July 2, 2004. Cody's sons, as well as three nephews who are also in the Army, offer the general good intelligence on what troops are talking about.

## Sons, nephews help Cody keep tabs

Gen. Richard Cody has a small squad of scouts scattered among Army units sending him muddy boots-level intelligence on what the troops are talking about.

"I have the fortune of having these young leaders, who happen to be my sons and nephews, that talk to me about their soldiers," the Army's vice chief of staff said Thursday.

Cody's two sons are both captains and combat vets in the 101st Airborne Division. One is getting ready for his second combat tour, the other his third.

tising dollars are being thrown into the mix to help tilt the balance, Pace encouraged everyone in uniform to help in the effort.

"All of us should be talking about the value of service to country," Pace said.

"Not just about military service to country, but about young folks finding a niche in this society where they can serve the country for some time, in my mind, pay back a little bit what they've gotten from this country."

Young adults. And key for convincing young folks is what he calls the "influencers."

"We're seeing right now mothers and fathers and school teachers and other influ-

Cody also has three nephews wearing Army green as well. One of them is downrange now.

"So I get some direct input," Cody said. "His boys offer glimpses of what troops wrestle with in traditional chain of command could never offer."

"There's not many layers between a father and his sons," Cody said. "I get some pretty good insights as to what's bothering their soldiers, why their soldiers would reenlist and why they won't reenlist."

— Jon R. Anderson

encers that maybe are not talking about service to this nation," Cody said. "So, when you say, 'Army, you have a recruiting problem,' I say, 'America, you have a recruiting problem.'"

In the end, says Cody, it comes down to simple questions like, "What kind of Army do you want to have? Is service to this country important to you?"

### Stretching the force

For those already in uniform, Cody said the Army must do a better job of providing good housing and basic quality of life, especially as the service adds 30,000 soldiers to its active ranks and 70,000 troops now for-

ward-based in Europe and Asia are repositioned back to the United States.

"The net result is going to have 100,000 more soldiers back in the continental United States on the active side," said Cody, adding that existing bases will have to be expanded to handle the influx.

This comes, he said, even as the Army has had to mortgage base maintenance accounts to help fund the war in Iraq.

The Army has said it cut base funding by 30 percent. Four weeks ago, however, Army leaders decided to tighten their belt in other areas and have come up with about \$3 billion to reduce the base maintenance shortfall to 10 percent.

Meanwhile, the basic tools of the trade have taken a beating as well. Cody said the Army has lost 79 aircraft, three companies worth of tanks, and three companies worth Bradley Fighting Vehicles over the past three and half years of non-stop combat that began with the invasion of Afghanistan.

"This fight," Cody said, "has taken a

toe. If left unchecked, he said, that toll could have dire consequences.

"If we as a country don't show our appreciation — and that appreciation is really in how well we restructure them, how well we take care of the families, how well we get the balance right so that we can give some predictability into the Guard and Reserves as well as into our Iraq force — then, I think we will have stretched this all volunteer force."

While Cody stopped short of warning that the military could have to return to a draft, he said that may not be too far over the horizon.

### Close to breaking

Some corners of Congress have already been calling for a draft for more than a year now.

New York Rep. Charles Rangel, a Democrat, introduced legislation last year calling for exactly that. Although his bill made no headway, the issue continues to break debate as the war in Iraq drags on. "The all-volunteer force is close to breaking right now," said retired Maj. Gen. Edward Atkeson, now a prolific author on military affairs and a senior fellow at the Institute of Land Warfare. "When it does break, that's when you'll see the draft come back."

Atkeson said cracks are already showing with the use of stop loss to keep troops in beyond their active contracts and massive reserve mobilizations.

The worst-case scenario is that things just continue as they are."

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# 1-27 soldiers take on Rocket Valley

## Germany-based GIs train on systems at South Korea site

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

ROCKET VALLEY, South Korea — Germany-based rocketeers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment trained in South Korea this week on the latest multiple launch rocket systems as part of the annual Reception, Staging Onward Movement and Integration exercise.

Thousands of U.S. troops, from both on and off the Peninsula, are participating in RSOI and another exercise, Foal Eagle, this month.

The Babenhause, Germany-based 1-27 soldiers, who normally train on older M270 multiple launch rocket system (MLRS), arrived in South Korea two weeks ago and started training on the 2nd Infantry Division's state-of-the-art M270A1 MLRS, said Battery A commander Capt. Will Daniel, 32, of Buckhannon, W.Va.

On Thursday, they fired the M270A1 for the first time at Rocket Valley, a training area near the Demilitarized Zone.

Each M270A1 launcher can fire up to 12 rockets in quick succession. The main advantage of the newer MLRS is its ability to move into position and fire more quickly than the M270, Daniel said.

"It is a matter of seconds, whereas the older models take two or three times as long," he said.

Nearby, a tracked MLRS prepared to move along a muddy road in Rocket Valley — a steep tree-filled ravine with a small stream running down the middle.

The Grafenwohr training area where 1-27 fires the MLRS in Germany has a couple of rolling hills, but it is flat compared to Rocket Valley, Daniel said.

"It doesn't make a whole lot of difference. It is just a different firing solution," he added.

Battery A fire direction controller Sgt. Michael Pulbrook, 26, of Los Angeles, re-plays commands to MLRS crews depending on the type of round required and the type of mission.

The launchers can shoot short-, medi-



PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

**Above:** A multiple launch rocket system crewed by soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment prepares to fire during training exercises at Rocket Valley, South Korea, on Thursday. **Right:** A soldier from Headquarters Headquarters Battery, 2nd Infantry Division Artillery prepares to launch a weather balloon during Thursday's training. **Below:** A U.S. soldier stands guard during the exercise.

um- and long-range missiles. They can suppress enemy air defenses so helicopters can move into an area, do counter fire against enemy artillery units or go after targets of opportunity, he said.

Shortly after he spoke, the MLRS units moved into firing positions in the valley. When the command was given, the rocket tubes pointed skyward at about a 45-degree angle and spun to face their targets at the far end of the mist-shrouded valley. Suddenly three brightly glowing rockets streaked through the sky, leaving smoky white vapor trails in their wake.

The rocket shoot was the culmination of weeks of work for Battery A supply specialist Spc. Joey Correnti, 25, of Red Desert, Wyo., who arrived ahead of the unit and assembled the equipment, vehicles and field rations for more than 80 soldiers.

Correnti said troops in South Korea have a different attitude from GIs in Germany.

"The attitude is different because they have to be ready to go in a minute. We are a go in 72 hours to a week in Germany, but these guys would roll up the hill in an hour and a half and put rockets down range," he said.

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### GI dies in Baumholder

A soldier with 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division died March 12 in Baumholder, Germany.

Maj. Michael Indovina, 1st AD public affairs officer, confirmed the death, but said he did not have the soldier's name. The incident is under investigation, Indovina said.

### White Plume Award presented

John Dykema was recently presented with the White Plume Award — the most prestigious honor given by Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation — for more than 25 years of service as an MWR employee.

Dykema, the Installation Management Agency-Europe MWR Division nonappropriated one fund manager, received the award March 7 at a ceremony in Heidelberg, Germany. He has given consistent and superb service to MWR leadership and staff, and to soldiers and families for more than two decades, according to a press release.

### Naples park opens

NAPLES, Italy — The Carney Park recreational site reopened Friday, several weeks after mudslides blocked roads to the park.

Barriers erected for crews still working in the area narrowed the park access road to one lane. Officials encouraged drivers to use caution in a news release.

Golfers can begin calling in tee times for this

weekend. On Saturday and Sunday, the course will have 7:30 a.m. and noon shotgun starts.

While the Navy Outdoor Recreational Center in the park opened for business Friday, the regularly planned ski trip, trek and paintball events have been postponed until April 3.

Youth sports team selections and youth gymnastics will take place as planned on Saturday, and the Fairways Bar and Grill is open for the season, which runs May through September, officials said.

Further information is available by calling MWR Administration at DSN 626-4050.

### Elvis exhibit in Germany

The Museum of Communication in Frankfurt, Germany, will feature more than 300 objects related to Elvis Presley during its "Elvis in Germany" exhibit. The pieces include such items as clothing, records and posters.

The pop icon was stationed in Germany when he was in the Army between 1958 and 1960.

English-language tours start at 12:30 p.m. each Wednesday and at 4:30 p.m. on the following Sundays: March 20, April 3 and 17; May 1, 8 and 15. The Museum for Kommunikation is on Schumannstr. 53 in Frankfurt. Regular opening hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

Admission is 2 euros for adults, and 1 euro for children 6-16 years. Children under 5 are free. For more information, call the museum at (+49) (0)69-60-60-130 or see its Web site: [www.mspt.de](http://www.mspt.de)

From staff reports

## USAFE announces 2004 award winners

Stars and Stripes

U.S. Air Forces in Europe has named the winners of its 2004 aviation resources management and airmen life support awards.

The aviation resources management award winners are:

- Outstanding senior noncommissioned officer: Master Sgt. Yvonne B. Ferry, 31st Operations Support Squadron, Aviano Air Base, Italy;

- Outstanding noncommissioned officer: Staff Sgt. Courtney A. Gordon, 31st OSS, Aviano;

- Outstanding airman: Senior Airman Vanessa M. Brown, 470th Air Base Squadron, Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, Germany;

- Outstanding headquarters staff member: Master Sgt. Jillian E. Looman, USAFE headquarters, Ramstein Air Base, Germany;

- Outstanding civilian supervisor: Dieter F. Sourisseaux, 86th OSS, Ramstein.

The air crew life support award winners are:

- Outstanding unit: 48th Fighter Wing, RAF Lakenheath, England;

- Outstanding officer: Capt. Craig T. Barham, 494th Fighter Squadron, RAF Lakenheath;

- Outstanding noncommissioned officer: Tech. Sgt. Christopher S. Kelley, 23rd Fighter Squadron, Spangdahlem;

- Outstanding airman: Airman 1st Class Donald J. Morell, 510th FS, Aviano.

The winners will now compete at the Air Force level.

# Jordanian's alleged role in deadly blast fuels Shiite protest

BY SAMEER N. YACOB

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — More than 2,000 Shiites marched Friday through Baghdad and some broke into the Jordanian Embassy and raised the Iraqi flag atop it to protest the alleged involvement of a Jordanian in Iraq's single deadliest suicide bombing — a Feb. 28 attack south of Baghdad that killed 125 people.

The protest came just two days after an influential Shiite leader claimed during a Jordanian Assembly meeting that Jordan allegedly wasn't doing enough to prevent terrorists from slipping into Iraq.

In another development, Shiite and Kurdish negotiators reportedly have agreed that the National Assembly should reconvene on March 26 to elect a president and his council, officials said.

At least 2,000 protesters converged on the Jordanian Embassy after finishing Friday prayers at the Shiite mosque in downtown Baghdad. They burned Israeli and Jordanian flags and shouted slogans against King Abdullah II.

They chanted: "Take your enemies away! We do not want to see you!" and "There's no God but God, Abdullah is the enemy of God!"

Three men in green camouflage were later seen on an em-

bassy roof raising an Iraqi flag on a makeshift flagpole. Another flagpole with a crown that previously held the Jordanian flag was bare.

Iraqi police and special forces gathered outside the embassy but failed to prevent demonstrators from reaching the building. The demonstrators later dispersed. It was the largest anti-Jordanian demonstration in a week.

Shiites have staged similar protests in recent days after the Iraqi government on Monday condemned celebrations allegedly held by the family of a Jordanian man suspected of carrying out a terrorist attack that killed 125 people in the city of Hillah. Nearly all the victims were Shiite police and army recruits.

Jordanian government spokeswoman Asma Khader said her country condemned all terrorism and reaffirmed her government's solidarity with the Iraqi people.

"The government condemns strongly any attack against the Iraqi people, in particular the hideous massacre of Hillah which killed scores of innocent people," Khader said. "We have put [in place] intensive measures to track those terrorists and there is security coordination with Iraq to protect the borders of both countries."

Meanwhile, Shiite and Kurdish negotiators reportedly have



Iraqi demonstrators push through a police line on their way to the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad on Friday. More than 2,000 Shiites marched through the streets to protest the alleged involvement of a Jordanian in a Feb. 28 suicide attack south of Baghdad that killed 125 people.

agreed the National Assembly should reconvene on March 26 to elect a president, officials said Friday.

The latest dead came amid reports that not all Kurds were satisfied with assurances given by the Shiite-dominated United Iraqi alliance over the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and a Kurdish militia.

Although Iraqis voted on Jan. 30 to elect 275 people to represent them in their first freely elected

parliament in recent memory, the Kurds and Shiites that emerged as the country's main power brokers have been unable to form a coalition government.

The interim constitution sets no time limit for forming a government after the National Assembly convenes.

But once a president and vice presidents are elected, a prime minister must be chosen within two weeks.

## U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday at least 1,518 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,156 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is seven higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Thursday.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,380 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,047 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Spc. Paul M. Heltzel, 39, Baton Rouge, La.; killed Tuesday while on patrol when an explosive detonated in Baghdad; assigned to the National Guard, 2nd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 25th Brigade Combat Team, Eunice, La.

■ Army Staff Sgt. Ricky A. Kleffner, 36, Ovid, Mich.; killed Tuesday by small arms fire in Baghdad; assigned to the National Guard, 1st Battalion, 182nd Field Artillery Regiment, Detroit.

# Report: Army reviewing spike in Humvee mishaps

Stars and Stripes

Army officials tracking Humvee problems have seen sharp increases in rollover accidents and deaths in recent months, according to a report in U.S. Today.

The paper reported that the Army is trying to determine whether the spike in accidents is because of the increased use of the vehicles, the inexperience of the drivers,

or the shifting weight caused by armor plating.

According to a U.S. Today analysis of Army records, the numbers of serious vehicle accidents and fatalities in Iraq in the last four months have doubled from the four months prior.

So far this year 14 soldiers have been killed in accidents involving Humvees or trucks.

The most recent rollover death occurred on March 11. Army Spc. Nicholas Eugene Wilson, a member of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division based at Camp Casey, South Korea, died near Ramadi when his Humvee rolled off the road and into a water-filled ditch.

The March issue of Countermeasure, the Army's ground safety magazine, includes a look at the problem titled "On a Roll to

Die" and includes tips like wearing seat belts and securing loose equipment to avoid serious injuries in a rollover accident.

U.S. Today reports that the Army is developing a four-hour driving course for soldiers, particularly those being sent to Iraq, to cover safety and rollover concerns.

Records on Marine Humvee accidents were not available.

## U.S. crew helps free vessel

ARLINGTON, Va. — A U.S. Coast cutter, the USCGC Munro, and two British ships saved the crew of a Thai fishing vessel Thursday that had been hijacked by three Somali crewmembers in the Gulf of Aden Wednesday night.

After learning from the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Center in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, that the hijackers had taken over and were demanding an \$800,000 ransom, crew from the Munro — with support from the HMS Invaluable and HMS Nottingham — boarded the Thai-flagged Sirichai Nava 12 around noon on Thursday and freed the hostages.

The Munro is deployed to the region as part of Combined Task Force 150, a coalition maritime force working in the Horn of Africa, the North Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

From staff reports

# Swedish citizen kidnapped in Iraq released

By MATTIAS KAREN

The Associated Press

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — An Iraqi-born Swedish national kidnapped in Iraq more than a month ago has been freed, police said Thursday.

Minas Ibrahim al-Yousifi was released early Friday, Swedish lawmaker Cecilia Wikstrom said after speaking by telephone to his family.

"He was very relieved but worn out. He's tired, of course, and needs to rest."

Wikstrom said the family did not say whether a ransom had been paid, but she said: "I think that's the case. But I don't have it confirmed."

She said al-Yousifi called his children Friday morning after being freed. "This is a dream come true for them," she said.

A spokeswoman for Sweden's National Police also confirmed his release.

Al-Yousifi's kidnappers, who called themselves "The Martyr al-Isawi Brigades," had threatened to decapitate al-Yousifi if they weren't paid a \$3 million ransom and given a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

He was shown on a videotape made Feb. 17, an assault rifle pointed at his head, and in a videotape made public March 2 saying he expected to be killed.

He was shown pleading for his life and appealing to Pope John Paul II and Sweden's king to help win his release.

Al-Yousifi reportedly was the leader of an Iraqi political group, the Christian Democratic Party.

Sweden's Foreign Ministry has been tight-lipped about the case, saying only that it had been using diplomatic channels to negotiate al-Yousifi's release.

The Scandinavian country's ambassador to Iraq is based in neighboring Jordan.

Wikstrom said al-Yousifi planned to give a news conference Saturday in Baghdad.

More than 200 foreigners have been kidnapped in Iraq, and more than 30 have been killed.

An Italian journalist, Giuliana Sgrena, was released two weeks ago after a month in captivity.



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# Bazaar dealers come to troops in Afghanistan

BY KENT HARRIS  
Stars and Stripes

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Once every week, U.S. servicemembers get a chance to browse through local merchandise without crossing the perimeter fence.

The bazaar is held at American compounds in Bagram and Kabul. Dozens of local merchants set up stalls at designated spots with the goal of separating Americans from their dollars. In return, the vendors offer carpets, scarves, jewelry, swords, knives and various items made from wood, brass and stone.

Sgt. 1st Class Napoleon Cunningham, a soldier from Bahrenhausen, Germany, said he's been in country only about three weeks.

"I've been here every week that I've been [at Bagram]," he said, motioning to the nearby stalls that were somewhat hidden under a series of plastic covers designed to keep out most of the rain.

He was the one shopping, but his wife, Michaela, back in Germany was the one benefiting. "It's basically all for her," he said of the bag in his hand. "Ex-

cept for the movies."

Yes, the movies. The DVDs, featuring hundreds of options from American television and cinema, obviously aren't of Afghan origin. Some of those around the bazaar say the DVDs are probably from Pakistan.

Some are pretty good copies, buyers say. Others aren't. But because it costs just a few dollars to

get DVDs that sometimes feature four or five movies — including some still making first runs in the States — not many customers seem to be complaining.

"I haven't tried mine yet," Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rogel Pagaduan said. He was referring to DVDs he had bought a week earlier. This week, he paid \$10 each for three blankets. "I think it's a pretty good deal," he said.

But maybe not as good as the one Capt. Peter Santos said he got. He purchased five carved wooden chests — each personally engraved with a name — for much less than he would have paid in Germany.

"I'm going to come and pick them up in two weeks," he said. "I got one for each member of my family."



Sgt. 1st Class Napoleon Cunningham takes advantage of the bazaar Friday on Bagram Air Base to buy gifts to send back to his wife in Germany.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Above: The bazaar at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, features a wide array of goods from local vendors.

Bazaars are held every Friday at Bagram and Kabul, and on Saturdays at Kandahar.

Below: Soldiers carry away treasures bought at the bazaar.

Many purchases come after some haggling. The buyers often end up paying more than they would if they were in a village off base, but those kinds of shopping opportunities come rarely, if ever. The sellers admit they're making more off the troops than they could off base.

"I can sell more here," said Ayatollah Nour, who was offering a variety of locally made carpets. He characterized business as

"not bad." He said some of the carpets he sells take a month to make. Some take three months. Like many merchants, he spends about half the week selling wares at different coalition military compounds around the region.

Maj. John Tammes said the bazaar is a good deal for merchants, servicemembers and local villagers. Merchants pay the equivalent of about \$180 each time they come on base. The military puts that money into a local bank before using it to fund a variety of local projects.

He said there are 133 total slots for merchants at Bagram, with most limited to selling their goods every two weeks. They often line up their trucks on Thursday afternoons outside the gate to get a good spot for the next day.



Staff Sgt. Clint Kramer said a group of soldiers at Bagram takes a look at the merchandise before it goes on sale.

"We walk through to make sure they aren't selling merchandise that's prohibited and not going to clear customs," he said.

Even those responsible for checking items get a chance to buy.

"There's a lot of good junk out there," said Spc. Don Henry, a member of Kramer's customs crew.

E-mail Kent Harris at: [harris@starsandstripes.com](mailto:harris@starsandstripes.com)

## Two men indicted in \$4M KBR contract fraud case

BY CHARLES R. BABCOCK  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A former manager for a Halliburton Co. subsidiary and an alleged accomplice in Kuwait defrauded the U.S. government out of nearly \$4 million by inflating the price of supplying fuel tankers for military operations in Kuwait in 2003, prosecutors said Thursday.

The 10-count indictment, returned Wednesday by a federal grand jury in Illinois, is believed to be the first criminal case of contracting fraud stemming from the war in Iraq, officials said. Halliburton, which Vice President Dick Cheney headed from 1995 to

Employee, accomplice allegedly inflated price of supplying fuel tankers for military operations in Kuwait in 2003

2000, is one of the government's largest contractors there.

Jan Paul Miller, the U.S. attorney for the Central District of Illinois, said in an interview that the investigation began about a year ago after Kellogg Brown & Root Inc., which holds a giant logistics contract to supply military needs in the Middle East, informed the government it had suspicions of wrongdoing.

According to the indictment, Jeff Alex Mazon, 36, who worked

for KBR in Kuwait, schemed with Ali Hijazi, of La Nouvelle General Trading & Contracting Co., to assure La Nouvelle would win a contract for storing and dispensing fuel at a military airport in Kuwait. KBR had estimated the work would cost about \$685,000, and La Nouvelle bid \$1.67 million, the government said. Mazon then allegedly inflated that and another bid by a factor of 3.3 and awarded the contract to Hijazi's firm for \$5.5 million — nearly \$4 million more than the company's original bid.

Around September 2003, soon after Mazon left KBR, Hijazi allegedly gave Mazon a \$1 million check for his favorable treatment of La Nouvelle.

Each man was charged with four counts of fraud against the United States and six counts of wire fraud.

Mazon, who was arrested Wednesday in Georgia, appeared in court Thursday in Atlanta before being sent to Illinois for an arraignment hearing, according to

Sharon Paul, a spokeswoman for Miller's office.

An Army command in Rock Island, Ill., administered the logistics contract.

Democrats in Congress have criticized Halliburton's work supporting the war in Iraq, especially a separate \$2.5 billion no-bid contract to repair oil fields. Auditors turned up \$1.8 billion in "unsupportable costs" in the \$10.5 billion logistics contract cited in the indictment, which KBR won on a competitive bid. Despite those findings and a recommendation to withhold some of the payments, the Army decided last month to continue paying Halliburton in full, plus performance bonuses.



## IN THE STATES

# Judge orders removal of Schiavo's feeding tube

## Congress reportedly subpoenas brain-damaged Fla. woman

The Associated Press

PINELLAS PARK, Fla. — The presiding judge in the case of Terri Schiavo ruled Friday that the feeding tube keeping the brain-damaged woman alive must be removed, despite efforts by congressional Republicans to block the move by seeking her appearance at hearings.

Pinellas Circuit Judge George Greer refused a request from U.S. House attorneys to delay the removal, which he had previously ordered to take place at 1 p.m. EST. Greer determined that it should go forward about an hour

after another judge issued a temporary delay blocking the tube's removal.

"I have had no cogent reason why the [congressional] committee should intervene," Greer told attorneys in a conference call, adding that last-minute action by Congress does not invalidate years of court rulings.

Attorneys seeking to block the removal vowed to appeal.

Michael Schiavo has waged a yearslong court battle with his parents-in-law, contending his wife, who doctors say has been in a persistent vegetative state since

1990, would not want to live that way. Her parents dispute that, and say she could get better.

The tube has been removed twice in the past and then reinserted as the battle continued.

Friday's ruling came after U.S. Senate and House committees in the Republican-controlled Congress issued subpoenas for Schiavo, her husband, and her caregivers to appear at hearings on March 25 and March 28, which would in effect keep her alive for the time being.

The Pinellas Park hospice where Schiavo lives received a subpoena Friday morning, spokeswoman Louise Cleary said. Officials there did not say who was subpoenaed or disclose their next steps.

"It is a contempt of Congress to prevent or discourage someone from following the subpoena that's been issued," David Gibbs, the attorney for her parents, said Friday. "What the U.S. Congress is saying is, 'We want to see Terri Schiavo.'"

"The family is prayerfully excited about their daughter going before the United States Congress for the whole world to see how



A Florida Circuit Court judge ordered the removal of a feeding tube for Terri Schiavo, pictured above with her mother. Earlier Friday, U.S. Senate Republicans reportedly issued subpoenas for Schiavo and her husband to testify before the Health Committee.

alive she is."

Howard Simon, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Florida office, had said that his group's attorneys were working with Michael Schiavo's attorneys to determine the effect of the subpoenas.

"This is clearly an effort to circumvent a lawful court order by a state judge," Simon said. "I am not sure how a subpoena, which is ordinarily done to produce records or some body to testify, can essentially have the effect of an injunction overriding the orders of a court."

Terri Schiavo's father, Bob Schindler, went into the Woodside

Hospice in Pinellas Park about 9:30 a.m. to visit his daughter.

Outside the hospice, about 30 people keeping vigil dropped to their knees in prayer when word spread of Greer's ruling.

**"Terry Schiavo is alive. She's as alive as you and I. As such, we have a moral obligation to protect and defend her."**

**Tom DeLay**  
House Majority Leader

"Terry Schiavo is alive. She's as alive as you and I. As such, we have a moral obligation to protect and defend her," DeLay said.

"This is not over."

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## Woman leads Islamic service

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A female prayer service Friday with men in the congregation despite sharp criticism from Muslim religious leaders in the Middle East who complained that it violated centuries of tradition.

Amina Wadud, a professor of Islamic studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, led the service at Synod House at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, an Episcopal church in Manhattan.

"The issue of gender equality is a very important one in Islam, and Muslims have unfortunately used highly restrictive interpretations of history to move backward," Wadud said before the service. "With this prayer service, we are moving forward."

About 80 to 100 people attended the service, and the group appeared evenly divided between men and women.

The event was meant to draw attention to the inequality in Muslim spiritual life and Muslim life in general, said Asra Q. Nomani, an author and former Wall Street Journal reporter who is the lead organizer of the prayer.

There was a brief outburst from some protesters outside the building at the start of the service, but they were kept from entering by police.

Some critics have accused Nomani of using the event to publicize a book she has written about women and Islam.

The sheik of Cairo's Al-Azhar mosque said Islam permits women to lead other women in prayer, but not a congregation with men in it.

"A woman's body is private," Sheikh Sayed Tantawi wrote in a column in the Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram in which he was asked about Wadud's planned prayer.

"When she leads men in prayer, in this case, it's not proper for them to look at the woman whose body is in front of them. Even if they see it in their daily life, it shouldn't be in situations of worship, where the main point is humility and modesty."

# Letterman worker charged in plot

## Man allegedly planned to kidnap 'Late Show' host's baby, nanny

BY JOHN MACDONALD  
The Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — David Letterman and his girlfriend thanked law enforcement officials for uncovering a plot to kidnap their 16-month-old son from their Montana ranch, saying they were "forever grateful."

The man charged Thursday with hatching the scheme, Kelly A. Frank, worked as a painter at the talk-show host's 2,700-acre spread near the rugged Rocky Mountain Front. The 43-year-old Frank, according to police, had planned to hold the boy and his nanny for \$5 million ransom.

In a statement issued by the publicist for Letterman's production company, Worldwide Pants, Letterman and his girlfriend, Regina Lasko, praised the FBI and local authorities.

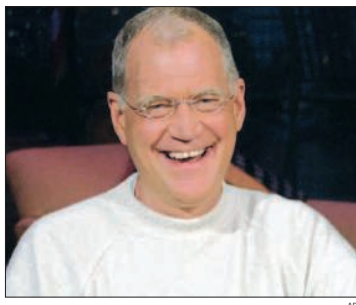
"We will be forever grateful for their tireless efforts and determination to vigorously pursue this situation," the couple said in the statement.

Steven Rubenstein, a spokesman for Worldwide Pants, said he could not comment on whether Letterman's family was in Montana at the time of Frank's arrest.

Mike Ferriter of the state Department of Corrections said Frank had been working as a painter at Letterman's ranch west of Choteau in north-central Montana and apparently confided in an acquaintance earlier this month of his plan to kidnap Letterman's son and nanny for ransom.

According to the affidavit filed by Teton County Attorney Joe Coble, Frank had told the acquaintance that he knew Letterman and his family would be visiting their Montana home soon, and that Frank had a key to the house, knew where the baby slept and included the kidnap the nanny "so that she could take care of the child."

The acquaintance contacted au-



"Late Show" host David Letterman and his girlfriend, Regina Lasko, thanked authorities for their efforts. Police charged a man Thursday on allegations he was plotting to kidnap Letterman's young son and nanny from the talk-show host's Montana home.

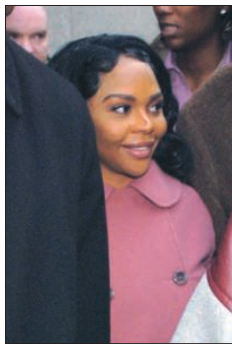
thorities Sunday, according to the affidavit. Sheriff George Anderson told the weekly Choteau Acantha newspaper that Frank was arrested the following morning at another area ranch where he was working.

Besides the felony solicitation charge, Frank is charged with fel-

ony theft for allegedly overcharging Letterman for painting, and a misdemeanor charge of obstruction for lying to an investigator about the alleged plot.

Frank is jailed in neighboring Pondera County on \$600,000 bail.

Associated Press writer Iren Iwanski contributed to this story.



Lil' Kim, whose real name is Kimberly Jones, leaves Manhattan federal court Thursday in New York. Kim was convicted of perjury and conspiracy in connection with a shootout outside a Manhattan radio station in 2001.

## Rapper Lil' Kim facing jail time for perjury conviction

BY LARRY NEUMEISTER  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Grammy-winning hip-hop star Lil' Kim could face years in prison when she is sentenced in June for lying about a shootout outside a radio station.

Her convictions Thursday on three counts of perjury and one of conspiracy each carry terms of up to five years in prison, but as a first-time offender she was expected to receive far less than 20 years. Any term would make her the first major female rapper to do time.

The 29-year-old performer, known for her raunchy raps and revealing outfits, was acquitted of obstruction of justice.

She and her assistant, who also was convicted, shook their heads as the verdicts were delivered, and supporters broke out in sobs.

Lil' Kim declined to comment outside court, but in a statement issued later, she said she was "disappointed" by the verdict.

"Throughout my life, I have always lived with adversity and I will continue to have faith and do good for my family, friends and fans," she said.

Both women are free on bond and will be sentenced June 24.

The former sidekick and girlfriend of the late Notorious B.I.G. had testified that she didn't notice two close friends at the scene of the 2001 gun battle — her manager, Damon Butler, and Suif "Gutta" Jackson. Both men have since pleaded guilty to gun charges.

The shootout occurred outside WQHT, known as Hot 97, when Lil' Kim's entourage crossed paths with a rival rap group, Capone-N-Noreaga. Kim's entourage confronted them about the song "Bang, Bang" from a Capone-N-Noreaga album, which contained a scathing insult to Kim from her longtime rival, Foxy Brown. A shootout erupted, leaving one man injured.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Cathy Seibel told jurors that the 4-foot-11 Lil' Kim had repeatedly lied to them, just as she did to the grand jury.

The prosecutor belittled the defense claim that the sunglasses-wearing Lil' Kim didn't notice her two close friends at the scene of the crime. "You would have to believe they were magic sunglasses that only block out your eyes that the sunglasses-wearing Lil' Kim didn't notice her two close friends at the scene of the crime," Seibel told the jury.

Hot 97 is the same station where the bosses of 50 Cent and The Game traded bullets last month.

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## IN THE WORLD

# Putt...trolling talks with three European leaders

BY CHRISTINE OLLIVIER

The Associated Press

PARIS — Russian President Vladimir Putin met with his French counterpart Jacques Chirac in Paris on Friday before informal talks with three European leaders on prickly issues such as democratic reform in Russia and the nuclear aspirations of Iran.

Chirac greeted Putin at the Elysee Palace, where military guards in plumed hats stood at attention. The two leaders were having lunch one-on-one — an opportunity for Chirac to raise difficult issues without putting Putin on the spot in front of others.

A full schedule was planned for Putin before the talks with Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero.

At the Elysee, Putin and Chirac greeted Russian writers taking part in the annual Paris book fair. As a teenager, Chirac studied Russian and translated a few classics of the language, and Putin thanked him for his "love and devotion" to the country's literature.

Later, Putin will have a private tour of a French defense center for air operations in Taverny, north of Paris. That visit was seen



French President Jacques Chirac, right, guides Russian President Vladimir Putin after lunch Friday at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

as a repaid favor after Chirac in April became the first Western leader to tour Russia's top-secret Titov space control center.

Friendly persuasion were the bywords of the daylong visit.

France sees the overstretched hand as the best way to elicit change, especially since Russia is now at the European Union's doorstep.

Eight former Soviet bloc countries joined the EU in May.

The three European leaders

"consider that they must have a relationship of confidence with Russia and avoid ... a situation where Russia would be isolated," said Thomas Gomart, a specialist on Russia with the French Institute of International Relations.

A range of potentially sensitive issues were likely to be discussed during Friday's talks. They included Putin's perceived backsliding on democracy in Russia, as well as Iraq, the Middle East peace process and Iran's suspected nuclear program.

## EU seeks to sharpen its military response

BY PAUL AMES

The Associated Press

LUXEMBOURG — European Union defense ministers opened talks Friday aiming to halve the time it takes to send elite battlegroups to international troublespots.

EU officials want to secure backing from ministers to ensure that the 1,300-strong rapid-response units which the EU is setting up to snuff out potential crises can be ready to deploy within five days of the bloc deciding to launch a mission.

The previous target was 10 days. The EU agreed in November to set up 13 such battlegroups by 2007 as a key component of the bloc's drive to build up an effective military wing. The first such unit, led by Britain, is already primed for EU missions.

"It's important ... that we continue the work on European defense and in particular building capabilities," British Defense Secretary Geoffrey Hoon told reporters ahead of the meeting.

The ministers also will look ahead to better coordinate the EU's military response to natural disasters in the light of the Asian tsunami disaster. EU officials were im-

pressed by the rapid ability of U.S. military units to deploy to areas around the Indian Ocean hit by the waves.

Ministers will have a preliminary discussion on how Europe can more rapidly mobilize military resources to support civilian aid efforts in disaster areas.

New EU nations in eastern Europe are expected to press the bloc to consider a request from the Georgian government for the EU to help monitor Georgia's northern border with Russia.

Opposition from Moscow forced the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to end its six-year monitoring mission on the border. The Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania are leading calls for the EU to take over the mission, but other EU members are reluctant.

Officials said the EU would likely send two or three observers to Georgia around the end of this month to establish a presence in the country. They did not rule out sending a larger mission.

However, European diplomats expressed hope the Georgian and Russian governments could agree themselves on measures to reduce tensions on the border, perhaps at a summit meeting in May.

### Nuclear smugglers

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukrainian weapons dealers smuggled 18 nuclear-capable cruise missiles to Iran and China during Leonid Kuchma's rule, prosecutors said Friday, adding to mounting evidence of high-level corruption under the watch of the former leader already linked to possible illicit arms sales to Iraq.

The Associated Press had reported exclusively Feb. 3 that a government probe into lucrative illicit weapons sales by officials loyal to Kuchma had led to secret indictments or arrests of at least six arms dealers accused of selling missiles to Iran and China.

### Chemical charges

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands — A Dutch businessman accused of complicity in genocide for selling chemicals to Iraq in the 1980s knew that Saddam Hussein might use them as weapons, prosecutors said at his first public hearing Friday.

The case is seen as a landmark because it would be the first time a businessman has been prosecuted for war crimes by a national court.

Frans van Anraat, 62, was not required to enter a plea or make a statement at the pretrial hearing.

From The Associated Press

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## Blacks have opportunities

In response to "Why black enlistments dropped" (letter, March 14), I have seen nothing but positive steps in the services to promote and give career and educational opportunities to blacks as well as those of different nationalities.

To say that blacks can't overcome social and political elements due to their pigmentation is nothing more than an all-too-eager response to bring up feelings that simply are not part of today's military. Military services promote blacks as much as their white counterparts. The military gives everyone excellent opportunities to better themselves. It is up to the individual to take those opportunities and utilize them.

The military doesn't prevent you from being welcomed or accepted; you are keeping yourself that way with a negative point of view that is well left in the past.

Vanessa Rock  
Hohenfels, Germany

## Don't include me in 'we'

In response to the writer of "Why black enlistments dropped" (letter, March 14), there are several things I need to make very clear.

You raised your right hand; no one forced you to join. I'm really wondering if the writer read what he wrote before he sent it and, what is more disturbing, Stripes printed it.

Do not use the word "we"; you do not speak for me or blacks.

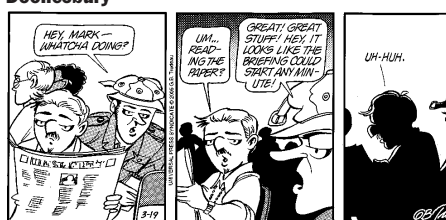
You might step to the side until being called upon, [but] I lead by example, that's from the front.

What's this about "we" being exposed to the environment and situation at that? Last time I checked, America elects its leaders and it did away with dictatorship, and you can practice the religion of your choice and say what you have said without fear of persecution.

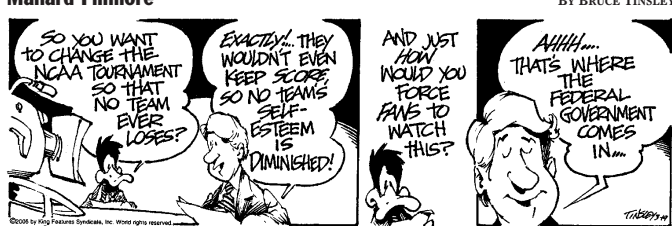
I have no discontent or dissatisfaction; it's not what you make of it.

Blacks have been attending institutions of higher learning; this is not something that just happened.

## Doonesbury



## Mallard Fillmore



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Next time you are in your window to re-enlist, please don't. I think "we" can make it without you.

One more thing: one-parent household, four graduated from college.

Staff Sgt. Antonio D. Releford  
Schweinfurt, Germany

## Proud to serve

I was disappointed to learn that the Army's bonuses and educational benefits do not "meet the standards" of [one letter writer's] "pride and dignity." ("Why black enlistments dropped," letter, March 14).

Perhaps I have lower standards. I am proud to serve my country and will re-enlist as soon as my window opens.

Sgt. James Anderson  
Camp Liberty, Iraq

## Right to an opinion

I would like to respond to the recent letters concerning the comic "Doonesbury."

I have noticed that most of the recent letter writers have missed out on the most important part of all this: Everyone has a right to their opinion whether you like it or not.

I personally do not like "Doonesbury"

for its left-wing propaganda, but I will not request any paper to remove it from its editorial section because some people do like it.

I also believe in freedom of speech, which also entails with it the freedom to choose. I read a recent letter in which the author quoted a Vermont editor about "letters to the editor" being the mouth of fools. I would like to point out that this runs true on both sides, not just conservatives to which the letter writer was alluding.

Staff Sgt. Andres E. Redondo  
Camp Taji, Iraq

## Combat arms troops special

I used to be in the infantry but I have changed my military occupational specialty to military police, and I do not think anyone but combat arms should get the Combat Infantryman Badge.

You may see combat several times, but it is not your job to do just that, and only that, if you are not combat arms. You are in support of some kind and you support the combat MOSs, and that is your job.

You do get a unit patch on your right sleeve signifying you were in a combat situation. Why is that not good enough?

If you are not in an MOS that trains only for combat, then you are in a support position. The guys in combat MOSs deserve the extra award. They are different and special. I know that might be difficult to hear in this day and age when everyone [thinks they] deserve what everyone else has.

Everyone deserves awards for what they do above and beyond, and a lot of credit is due to all the support MOSs. Regardless of the situation, if I were to see combat now I would not deserve any extra award because I am in a combat support MOS and I support in any way I can. If that means standing right beside them, then that is where I will be.

If you are attached to an airborne unit, you are given airborne wings. Oh, that's right, you have to go to school first, by changing your MOS. So what is the difference? The answer: There is none. They are special, deal with it.

Sgt. Joshua Frischman  
Heidelberg, Germany

## BY GARRY TRUDEAU

## BY BRUCE TINSLEY





## YOUR MONEY

## After a decade of quiet, inflation wakes

## Experts: Americans will pay prices as rates rise, Fed reacts

BY MIKE MEYERS

Minneapolis St. Paul Star Tribune

For several years now, consumers have been living in a shopper's paradise. But 2005 may be the year paradise is lost.

The long, quiet period for inflation, in which every rise in price for one set of goods and services, such as auto repairs or dry cleaning, has been offset by reductions in prices elsewhere, such as for cars and clothes, looks to have come to an end.

"There are brewing inflation pressures," said Scott Anderson, senior economist at Wells Fargo & Co. in Minneapolis.

"The economic winds are changing. A lot of forces that had kept prices contained are now moving in the opposite direction."

Peter Kretzmer, senior economist at Bank of America, agrees that the past 10 years, and particularly the first few years of this century, have featured the kind of

ultra-low inflation not seen in the United States since the Beatles first arrived, have run their course.

"That period has ended, replaced by very mild inflation," Kretzmer said.

What that inflation does to the nation's economy may have as much to do with how the Federal Reserve reacts to it — with a just-right series of interest rate increases to keep prices under control but the economy undamaged, or with recession-inducing overkill that punctures the economy along with inflation.

"The Fed is beginning to become a little concerned," said Nariman Behravesh, chief economist of Global Insight, a leading economic forecasting firm. Global Insight earlier had expected the Fed to stop raising short-term interest rates by the middle of 2005, but Behravesh now foresees interest rate hikes through the end of the year.

"I don't think it's anything serious — yet," he said of the rate

**"The economic winds are changing. A lot of forces that had kept prices contained are now moving in the opposite direction."**

Scott Anderson

Senior economist, Wells Fargo &amp; Co., Minneapolis

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"I don't think it's anything serious — yet," he said of the rate



Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan takes his seat prior to testifying before the Senate Special Joint Committee on Capital Hill in Washington on Tuesday. Economists say "the Fed is beginning to become a little concerned" about impending inflation pressures.

moves.

Bond traders apparently also believe the Fed will keep up the drumbeat of higher interest rates for some time to come. That's the only explanation, in the view of analysts, for long-term rates remaining relatively low — in the range of 4.3 percent for a 10-year Treasury bond — in the face of higher short-term interest rates and increasing signs of inflationary pressures.

"As next round of [inflation] numbers comes in, it will become more clear we're going higher, not lower," said Kenneth Goldstein,

economist at the Conference Board, a business research organization based in New York City. "Watch that [10-year] bond yield price. It easily could go to 5 [percent]."

There are ample reasons for Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan to have some worries about what's ahead on the inflation front.

Last week, the government reported a sharper-than-expected rise in producer prices — a bellwether of consumer prices in the months ahead.

Meanwhile, the decline in the value of the U.S. dollar, a trend that's been in place for nearly three years, is forcing U.S. consumers to pay more for some imported goods. Foreign firms, wary of losing market share, had resisted trying to raise prices until recently.

"Obviously, [foreign] companies can take a bit on their profit margins if they think the dollar decline is a temporary phenomenon," Anderson said. "But if they think

it's sticking, they'll try to push through price increases." In January, the price of imported goods from industrial countries — excluding China, which still ties the value of its currency to the dollar — was 6.7 percent higher than a year earlier.

Within the United States, the labor market is starting to create more jobs and workers are getting harder to find in some industries, Anderson said.

"We could see some stronger wage and salary increases" in 2005, Anderson said, and companies will try to pass along at least some of those costs through higher prices.

The prices of the commodities that many firms buy, and which make up their second-largest cost after labor, also have slipped higher.

Until lately, manufacturers were hard-pressed to pass along higher prices to recoup what they are paying for everything from lumber and steel to chemicals and paper.

For example, new vehicle prices in 2004 were lower than in 2003, and the prices in 2003 were less than in 2002. The last time vehicle prices went up year over year, after taking the effects of inflation into account, was in 2000, according to government figures.

"The car story is the most stark and remarkable" example of the quiet inflation environment so far in this century, Goldstein said.

This year, automakers are trying to raise car and truck prices — so far, with mixed success. The three for used vehicles, however. The average sale price on used cars and trucks in the past couple months was 1 to 1.5 percent higher than a year earlier. That might not sound like much, but in January 2004, used vehicle prices were about 10 percent lower than in the same period a year earlier.

## THURSDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

## INDEXES

INDEXES								
High	52-week Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg	52-week % Chg	
10,584.46	9,700.40	Dow Jones Industrials	10,633.07	-112.8	-1.1	2.3	+2.3	
3,089.87	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,757.52	-58.91	-1.54	-1.07	+3.95	
553.82	529.89	Dow Jones Utilities	565.57	-2.47	-0.43	+6.45	+6.71	
7,455.06	6,711.33	NYSE Composite	7,264.47	-42.94	-0.59	+2.0	+10.81	
1,539.14	1,536.74	Amex Index	1,483.94	-2.22	-0.15	+3.4	+10.78	
2,151.69	1,954.82	Nasdaq Composite	2,151.55	-18.21	-0.84	-7.24	+1.07	
1,229.11	1,060.72	S&P 500	1,164.07	-9.68	-0.81	-1.37	+5.72	
881.3	548.29	S&P MidCap	668.63	-5.81	-0.87	-1.0	+5.8	
656.11	515.99	Russell 2000	622.92	-3.90	-0.62	-4.40	+7.67	
13,108.95	10,768.52	DJ Wilshire 5000	11,715.16	-97.83	-0.83	-2.10	+6.72	

## NYSE

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)				MOST	
Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg	Name	
GenMotr	591513	29.01	-4.71	SPDR	SemiHfr
Exxon	522204	2.81	-1.10		
Elan	592827	7.32	+11	SP Engr	ISRE2000
FordM	290368	11.91	-3.2		SP Fnd
TimeWarr	241374	18.10	+37		
ExxonMbl	209463	60.29	-16	DIA Diam	
Pfizer	199785	26.85	-24	ISLqan	
Motorola	192902	15.25	-88	hvaCp s	
EMC Cp	189914	12.87	-85	OilSHst	
Delphi	184151	4.67	-27	SP Matls	

## AMEX

(\$1 OR MORE)		MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)			
Last	Chg	Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
119.12	-1.82	JDS Uniph	1557282	36.62	-4.3
32.69	-0.38	NESD Offsh	958499	1.78	-0.68
42.65	-0.34	Microsoft	736118	24.63	-28
124.47	-1.70	Intel	591675	23.54	-34
29.35	-0.30	Roch Mot s	587827	78.96	+11.87
106.35	-1.22	Cisco	472791	18.07	-1.87
10.87	-	SumMico	461906	4.19	-16
18.94	+4.89	Oracle	441963	13.02	-13
94.25	-0.20	SiriusS	328343	5.23	-10
30.58	-0.67	Biogenide	297910	37.19	-88

## NASDAQ

OR MORE)	
st	Chg
52	-.43
78	-.08
53	-.28
54	-.34
56	+11.87
07	-.18
19	-.16
02	-.13
23	-.10
19	-.88

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	\$1 =
Dollar	\$0.7300
British pound	\$1.57
Japanese yen (March 19)	102.00
South Korean won (March 19)	97.00
Commercial rates	\$1 =
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.2578
British pound	\$1.57
Canada (Dollar)	\$1.2612
Denmark (Krone)	6.46
Egypt (Pound)	7.79
Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.376/0.1670
Hungary (Forint)	7.7997
Iceland (Krona)	105.50
Israel (Shekel)	58.55
Japan (Yen)	104.52
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2578
Norway (Krone)	5.78
Philippines (Peso)	49.20
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.58
Singapore (Dollar)	1.0277
South Korea (Won)	1,003.81
Switzerland (Franc)	1.10
Thailand (Baht)	38.52
U.S. (New Line)	1.00
(Military exchange rates are those available to U.S. military personnel in facilities in the country of issuance of the currency.)	
Japan	104.52
Netherlands and the United Kingdom	
(For official currency exchange rates, see U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of International Finance.)	
U.S. dollar	\$1.00
British pound	\$1.57
Japanese yen	102.00
South Korean won	97.00
Singapore dollar	1.0277
Swiss franc	1.10
Thai baht	38.52
U.S. dollar	\$1.00

## Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

## Balancing credit cards

MarketWatch

NEW YORK — That unpaid balance on your credit card can really hurt your finances.

Most people know that if you make only the minimum monthly payment on your card, it can take you months — or even years — longer than you had intended before you can finally pay off the balance. But how bad is that, really? Say you have \$3,000 in debt on a credit card with a 15 percent interest rate. You figure you can do better meeting your monthly expenses, and even put a little aside for savings, if you only pay \$75 per month on the card.

At that rate, if you never again

add to the card's balance, you'll pay off the card in 18 years. And you'll also pay a whopping \$2,757.81 in interest Ouch.

To pay off your debt faster, you might try several approaches.

- Switch your remaining credit-card balances to a credit card with a lower interest rate.
- Pay more than your monthly minimum. Allot as much as you can reasonably spend toward your bill each month.
- Limit your credit card use, of course. Try to stick with cash or your debit card.
- To find out how much your credit-card balance is costing you, check out the credit card calculator at Bankrate.com.

## KEY DEFENSE STOCKS

Name	Div	PE	Last	Chg %
Alliant Technology	--	17	71.81	-51
Airbus Holdings	--	17	40.66	-10.0
Boeing	1.00	25	56.77	-1.71
Computer Sciences	14	44	46.66	-85
Northrop	.07	19	35.58	-22
General Dynamics	1.60	17	106.40	-3.9
General Electric	.88	22	25.61	-39
Halliburton	.50	48	41.90	+36
Hercules Corp.	.48	28	67.52	-127
Alisil Signal	.83	23	38.15	-90
L3 Communications	.50	22	74.65	-58
Lockheed Martin	1.00	21	59.95	-45
Northrup	.52	17	53.00	-142
Raytheon	.80	41	38.10	-63
Rockwell Int'l.	.46	23	58.19	+18
Selex Corp.	--	33	53.46	-24
Textron Inc.	--	24	26.45	-45
United Technologies	1.40	30	77.50	-81
	1.76	18	101.51	-79



## EUROPEAN FORECAST

**Benelux:** Partly to mostly cloudy. Highs in the low 50s to low 60s. Saturday lows in the mid 40s.

**Britain, Ireland:** Partly cloudy to cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s to mid 60s. Saturday lows in the mid 40s.

**Croatia and Bosnia:** Partly cloudy. Highs in the low 60s. Saturday lows in the 30s.

**France:** Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s. Saturday lows in mid 40s.

**Northern Germany:** Mostly cloudy to cloudy with rain. Highs in the mid 50s to low 50s. Saturday lows in the low to mid 20s.

**Southern Germany:** Partly to mostly cloudy with isolated rainshowers. Highs in the upper 50s. Saturday lows in the low to mid 40s.

**Hungary:** Cloudy with rainshowers. Highs in the mid 50s. Saturday lows in the mid 20s.

**Northern Italy:** Partly cloudy with morning fog. Highs in the low to mid 60s. Saturday lows in the upper 30s to low 40s.

**Southern Italy:** Sunny. Highs in the mid 50s to low 70s. Saturday lows in the upper 40s to low 50s.

**Kosovo:** Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 60s. Saturday lows in the upper 30s.

**Norway:** Cloudy with snow and rain. Highs in the mid 20s to mid 30s. Saturday lows in the mid teens to low 30s.

**Portugal, Spain:** Partly cloudy in the morning, becoming cloudy with rain in the evening. Highs in the mid 60s to mid 70s. Saturday lows in the low to upper 40s to low 50s.

**Turkey:** Sunny becoming mostly cloudy in the evening. Highs in the low 60s to low 70s. Saturday lows in the mid 30s to mid 40s.



## AFRICA

Capa Town	HI 84	LO 62	Mogadishu	HI 84	LO 74
Free town	89	77	Rabat	72	55
Kinshasa	89	73	Tripoli	68	47

## THE WORLD

Amsterdam	HI 51	LO 42	Manila	89	77
Bahrain	75	63	Mexico City	76	47
Beijing	59	35	Montreal	34	17
Bombay	82	63	Riyadh	80	54
Buenos Aires	67	59	Rio de Jan	85	76
Buenos Aires	67	59	Rio de Jan	85	76
Calcutta	89	74	Sao Paulo	82	63
Chennai	89	74	Sydney	72	62
Chennai	89	74	Tokyo	52	42

## TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

Alaska	HI 71	LO 41	Alaska	HI 71	LO 41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41

Alaska	HI 71	LO 41	Alaska	HI 71	LO 41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
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Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41

Alaska	HI 71	LO 41	Alaska	HI 71	LO 41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
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Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41

Alaska	HI 71	LO 41	Alaska	HI 71	LO 41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
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Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
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Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41

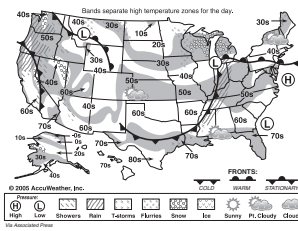
Alaska	HI 71	LO 41	Alaska	HI 71	LO 41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
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Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41
Alaska	71	41	Alaska	71	41

## SUN &amp; MOON

Sunrise (Baghdad)	Today	0608
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	0633	0631
Sunset (Baghdad)	1812	1814
Sunset (Frankfurt)	1835	1837

## THE UNITED STATES TODAY

As of noon, Eastern U.S. time



Scheduled to **ETS** or **PC**?

Check our Relocation Guide every Saturday to find Realtors at your new station.

STARS & STRIPES.  
Your HomeTown Newspaper



## Toll-road blues

**NH** MERRIMACK — Local motorists are disappointed that the discount tokens they use to pay ramp tolls at three exits in town are one step closer to being eliminated.

"The town of Merrimack is very disappointed that the House saw fit to eliminate the token and discount," Selectmen Chairman Dick Hinch said.

Merrimack motorists must pay 50-cent tolls at Exit 10, 11 and 12 of the Everett Turnpike. Eliminating the tokens is part of the plan to implement E-Z Pass in New Hampshire.

"There has to be some consideration given to the residents of Merrimack. ... You pay to get out and you pay to get in. There is no other town in the state like it," Hinch said, calling the ramp tolls "unfair."

The legislation passed by the state would eliminate the high-way tokens, which provide a 50 percent discount. The measure must be passed by the Senate and signed by the governor to take effect.

## Schools scan visitors

**TX** HOUSTON — More than 400 schools in 14 districts in the Houston area have gone high-tech when it comes to identifying and keeping track of campus visitors.

The new system, called V-soft — or visitor, student or faculty tracking — is a Web-based software program that can flag visitors who are known sex offenders. The system also keeps a log of when visitors arrive and leave campus, and alerts school officials to people who should not be on campus.

The computer software gets visitors' personal information by scanning their driver's license or state ID card. This information is checked against the Texas Department of Public Safety's database for registered sex offenders.

## Sky-high deck to reopen

**NY** NEW YORK — A 70-story-high observation deck at Rockefeller Center will reopen this fall after a \$75 million renovation, the complex's co-owner said.

The deck, atop 30 Rockefeller Center, has been closed since 1986, when the Rainbow Room restaurant expanded into its space. It is expected to draw about 2 million visitors a year, according to Tishman Speyer Properties, co-owners of Rockefeller Center.

Views from the open-air deck will encompass most of the city, including Central Park and the skyscrapers of midtown and lower Manhattan.

At 850 feet above street level, it will be the city's second-highest observatory (the highest is atop the Empire State Building, which is about 200 feet higher).

## Smoking ban advances

**NJ** TRENTON — Gamblers would not be allowed to



## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

smoke on Atlantic City casino floors or inside fraternal organizations under a measure passed by a New Jersey Senate committee.

Lawmakers voted 7-0 for the measure, which also covers restaurants, bars and offices.

Representatives from the Casino Association of New Jersey said a ban would drive away gamblers and harm the state's economy.

If the ban in New Jersey is passed, the state would join New York, Massachusetts, California and a handful of others that prohibit smoking in indoor public places.

## Goat keeper charged

**WV** CHARLESTON — A man who allegedly left a trail of dead goats through several states has lost custody of his 200-plus remaining animals pending the outcome of animal cruelty cases in Ohio and West Virginia.

Christopher Weathersbee, 64, fled to West Virginia with 16 of his goats, including a dead one he'd been storing in a freezer, in late February amid an impoundment and seizure by agents in Scioto County, Ohio.

Ohio agents found an estimated 80 goat carcasses on his rented property — including one in the house and another nine in a freezer, according to Teresa Landon, director of the Ohio Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.



## Reaching new height

Dewan Commodore, a Middletown High School senior, clears a strap used for the bar as he practices his high-jump technique during the second week of spring training at the school in Middletown, Ohio.

Weathersbee told officials he does not bury dead animals right away to allow the "spirit to pass," Landon said.

## Shrimp is big find

**ID** BOISE — Biologists with the Idaho National Guard have discovered a new species of fairy shrimp living in the off-dry lake beds of Idaho's desert.

Though they look delicate enough to match their name, they are strong enough to survive, unhatched, for years in the baking heat of summer and the frozen tundra of winter until enough rain falls and the pools return. Once they awaken they live a few frenzied weeks, mating and leaving behind tiny cystlike offspring, then die.

"This is a large, predatory fairy shrimp. This guy is about 3 inches long. That is huge for a fairy shrimp," biologist Dana Quinney said Tuesday during a news conference announcing the discovery.

## Ex-dead man on mend

**NC** LOUISBURG — A man who was hit by a car and mistakenly declared dead is out of the hospital and continuing his recovery in a rehabilitation center, relatives said.

Larry Green was hit by a car the night of Jan. 24 as he walked home after buying beer.

Green, 29, was examined on the scene by paramedics and a medical examiner, declared dead and his body taken to a morgue. There, 2½ hours after the accident, the same medical examiner detected signs of life. He was hospitalized.

Green suffered a severe head injury, broken leg and is paralyzed.

Two of the four paramedics who treated Green were fired and their credentials suspended, though the credential of one has been reinstated pending an administrative hearing. The other two were ordered to take remedial training. The medical examiner was not disciplined.

## Abortion ban on hold

**MI** LANSING — A new state law that bans a procedure critics call partial-birth abortion will not take effect this month so that the state has more time to respond to a federal lawsuit challenging the statute.

Under an agreement reached by Attorney General Mike Cox and three groups that filed suit, the abortion law was put on hold until June 15. It was scheduled to take effect March 30.

Cox spokeswoman Allison Pierce said the state needed more time to respond to the suit, which was filed March 1.

The American Civil Liberties Union, the Center for Reproductive Rights and Planned Parenthood Federation of American argue the law is unconstitutional because it could be interpreted as a ban on all abortions and does not allow exceptions for when a mother's life or health are in danger.



## Just skijoring

Sty St. Onge gets a pull from her 20-month-old American water spaniel, Emma, as they go skijoring down a road in Maple, Wis.



## Tulips are bloomin'

A tulip tree blooms brightly along 44th Street at Warwick Blvd in Kansas City.



## Hut of sand

Andy Briggs of Victoria, British Columbia, a sand artist with Sand Sculpture Company of Chicago, works on fine-tuning a beach hut made with 60 tons of riverbed sand on the exhibit floor at the Flower, Lawn & Garden Show in Kansas City, Mo.



## Get your frozen fish

Jeff Kissinger pulls up a perch while ice fishing on Erie Canal Lock 2 in Waterford, N.Y.



## Statuesque scene

A Keene State College student walks past a sculpture by Rob Lorenson titled "Aurora" on the school's campus in Keene, N.H.



## Gimme a kiss

Three-month-old calves lick milk from each other's faces on the Klodt Dairy Farm in Ottumwa, Iowa.

## Photos just for fun

**MI** ST. PAUL — State Rep. Tom Rukavina urged Gov. Tim Pawlenty to remove from his official Web site a "Pawnty Family Photo Album" containing 21 pictures of a pretty darn cute young future governor.

"I was a cute little baby, too," said Rukavina.

Rukavina contends that childhood pictures, which he views as designed to make folks feel warmer toward the governor, are a "totally inappropriate" form of self-promotion when posted on a taxpayer-financed Web site.

Pawlenty removed the pictures and playfully chided Rukavina for engaging in a trivial pursuit.

## Lockdown unsuccessful

**MD** JESSUP — An inmate was stabbed with a shank hours after authorities lifted a monthlong prison lockdown that was imposed during an intensive search for such homemade weapons.

The attacker had fashioned his weapon from a piece of metal in a light fixture, said Capt. Priscilla Doggett, spokeswoman for the Maryland Division of Correction.

She said the victim was treated for a non-life-threatening wound he suffered in the attack. Both men are serving life sentences for homicides.

## Fight for job ends

**KY** LOUISVILLE — A former police officer fired after shooting a teenager during an undercover drug buy dropped his bid to return to the police force and will receive \$59,500 in back pay, city officials said.

A statement from the mayor's office said McKenzie Mattingly ended his appeals in a six-month effort to recover his job.

Mattingly, a detective, fatally shot Michael Newby, 19, in January 2004 in an undercover drug buy gone awry.

Mattingly was indicted for murder but was acquitted of all charges related to Newby's death in a trial in September. He was fired last April by Chief Robert White, who said Mattingly violated department policy.

## Pre-funeral fund-raiser

**NH** HAMPTON — Former state lawmaker Jane Kelley, who is diagnosed with terminal cancer, threw herself a "pre-funeral" party where guests were asked to donate \$25 to her cremation fund.

In exchange, they were excused from attending the wake, funeral and sending flowers when she dies.

## A long wait for justice

**TX** HOUSTON — Months after his release from prison, a man who served nearly two decades behind bars is still waiting to find out if the evidence that questioned his guilt in a brutal crime will be enough to keep him free.

Prosecutors have asked the Court of Criminal Appeals to allow them to retry 44-year-old George Rodriguez in the kidnapping and

rape of a 14-year-old girl, for which he was convicted in 1987.

Rodriguez was serving a 60-year sentence for the crime when DNA tests showed blood and hair at the crime scene may have come from another man who was not prosecuted in the case.

Rodriguez was released in October because of faulty work and testimony in his case by the Houston Police Department's crime lab analysts.

## Loggers back at work

**OR** GRANTS PASS — Loggers went to work Monday after a 2002 forest fire, felling old-growth trees after the U.S. Forest Service closed off the area to keep out protesters.

Citing safety concerns for loggers and protesters alike, officials in the Siskiyou National Forest on Monday closed the 700-acre area and roads leading to the timber sale. Protesters had impeded loggers going to work.

Forest Service spokesman Tom Lavagnino said a crew of loggers had no trouble getting to work, and rangers had not spotted a tree sitter who logging opponents said was in a fir tree.

## Consolidation plan

**IO** DES MOINES — Lawmakers unveiled a six-year plan requiring Iowa's 99 counties and 950 cities to consolidate government services and separate into regions. The goal is to reduce duplication of government services and lower property taxes.

## Suicide or murder?

**CO** DENVER — Authorities have arrested a 14-year-old girl on suspicion of manslaughter while they investigate her story that she helped her father commit suicide.

The girl said her 56-year-old father, a self-employed electrician, tried to fatally shoot himself and was near death when she found him, allegedly prompting her to "end his suffering." Boulder County sheriff's Lt. Phil West said.

Investigators were trying to determine if the man indeed tried to kill himself, he said.

Inconsistencies in the girl's story and their initial investigation — including the absence of a suicide note — led them to arrest the teenager.

## Oyster restocking

**VA** BURGESS — Work has begun on what will be the largest restocking effort with disease-resistant shellfish in the Chesapeake Bay.

Officials think their latest idea may hold the key to restoring the ecologically and economically important bivalve.

"We're very optimistic," said Doug Martin, project coordinator for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Last week, Martin hosted a boat tour of the oyster grounds as an initial 339,000 specially bred native oysters were dumped into the river. Plans call for releasing a total of 15 million oysters by the end of next month.

Stories and photos from wire services

## AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFN's Web site at <http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil>



# FACES

## Shaq on Wheaties box

Shaquille O'Neal's taste in breakfast cereals might be changing.

The longtime fan of Frosted Flakes, which he once called "the best cereal ever created," is the latest athlete to grace the cover of a Wheaties box.

The Shaq box, which features a picture of the 12-time NBA All-Star in a red Miami Heat uniform on the front, hit supermarket shelves this week.

"Sexy man, sexy man,"

O'Neal said Wednesday, after unveiling a 7-foot replica of the box.

Since 1934, hundreds of athletes have appeared on the Wheaties box, starting with Jack Armstrong — the fictitious All-American boy.

"It's actually an honor," O'Neal said. "I remember as a youngster, going to the stores, seeing all those greats like Kareem and Magic on the box and then saying to my mother and father, 'I'm going to be on the cover of that one day.' And then they'd smack me and say, 'Shut up.' But he made it.



O'Neal

## Let's go, mambo!

Billy Dee Williams, Esai Morales, Latin Grammy winner Albita and Justina Machado will star in "The Mambo Kings," a new Broadway musical about two Cuban brothers and their journey from 1950s Havana to the posh nightclubs of Manhattan.

The musical opens Aug. 18 at the Broadway Theatre. The show is based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love" by Oscar Hijuelos, who co-wrote the book of the musical with Arne Glimcher. The score was written by Carlos Franzetti (music) and Glimcher (lyrics).

Williams

Williams

## My old Kentucky stars

The official induction ceremony isn't for nearly a year, but the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum has named nine 2006 inductees, including Naomi and Wynonna Judd.

The announcement Wednesday started a year of promotions leading to the official ceremony scheduled for Feb. 23, 2006, in Lexington.

Next year's class includes various music genres ranging from jazz to gospel.

Induction ceremonies are held every two years.

The class of 2006 also includes Lionel Hampton, Mary Travers, Dottie Rambo, Sam Bush, John Conlee, Todd Duncan and John Jacob Niles.

Photos and stories from The Associated Press



The four men who make up Lonestar — Ritchie McDonald, Dean Sams, Michael Britt and Keech Rainwater — arrive at the 38th annual Country Music Awards, held last November at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tenn. They're back in the studio, planning for their next project.

# They're already there... so now which way?

## The guys of Lonestar will keep doing what works

BY JOHN HAYES  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Where do you go when you get to the end of your dreams?

After cashing in on two successful albums and lucrative road tours, the Dixie Chicks stopped playing the Nashville game, recorded an unconventional CD that broke all the rules, flew their career into the stratosphere, willingly squandered it on a political statement, started families and continue to live lives of the rich and famous.

One of the hottest recorded and touring acts in history, Kenny Chesney moved out of Tennessee, hung a hammock in Margaritaville, squeezed a lime into his beer and wrote the most revealing, personal and non-commercial album of his career.

With 10 No. 1 country hits and gold or platinum wall-hangers for every one of their six non-holiday albums, the guys from Lonestar could easily break the mold and pursue personal musical interests with no fear of industry rejection.

Now back in the studio, preparing for their next project, what are their plans? "We're definitely hoping [the next CD] will take off," says guitarist Michael Britt. "We've set the bar pretty high for ourselves. One of our albums sold 3 million, so that's the benchmark."

Everybody handles success differently.

Britt, keyboardist Dean Sams, singer Ritchie McDonald and drummer Keech Rainwater see their popularity as a message from their fans that they're doing something right. With every opportunity available to them, they choose to keep doing what they do.

"I think the record label, it's their job to

**"We've always felt, don't do things that pigeonhole us, don't try to find songs like the last one, try to find something different, keep proving that we're diverse. But keep doing what works."**

Michael Britt  
Lonestar guitarist

sell the record," says Britt, on the phone from his home in Nashville. "They only look at that side of it. We have the luxury of looking at our whole career."

"There's no pressure for us. In the middle of making this record, we want to make a record that we're proud of."

Lonestar has come to understand the meth-

od behind the madness that has so far sold 8 million albums. Country radio's overwhelmingly female audience likes the band's diverse, upbeat and catchy tunes, and they think McDonald is cute.

"Love songs, rocking stuff and the family theme," says Britt. "That's what works for us."

"Mr. Mom," a bouncy, cuddly tune about daddy day care written by Ron Harbin and Don Pfimmer for last year's "Let's Be Us Again" CD, became the perfect Lonestar song.

"When we were playing fairs last summer, we were a little hesitant about playing that song," Britt says.

"We thought maybe that only people with kids would get into it. But there were high-school kids singing along. That song kind of evolved live, with the crowd singing every word so loud we'd just stop playing and let them all sing along."

As the band pulls together songs for its next CD — some found, some written by band members — Britt says they're not looking for the next "Mr. Mom," just something that works every bit as well.

"There's a reflective period [after an album is released] where we think about what worked, what we want to do next and how we can do what we've never done," he says. "We've always felt, don't do things that pigeonhole us, don't try to find songs like the last one, try to find something different, keep proving that we're diverse. But keep doing what works."



# Horoscope

Mercury goes retrograde in Aries. In the weeks to come, it may feel like you and your loved ones have revisited the tower of Babel — suddenly, no one is speaking the same language, and instead, everyone is uttering strange, unassociated sounds. It's not always necessary to understand. Listen as though to music.

## TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

**(March 19).** It's a trans-forming year. Your days will be filled with activities very different from the ones that occupied you last year. Let a trusted partner lead the way this month. Your self-confidence soars because you're proud of the hard work you do in June. An inheritance or legacy helps your financial picture in August. Lucky love signs are Scorpio and Cancer.

## ARIES (March 21-April 19).

Like the producer of reality TV competition, you don't always make the decision that's fair. Sometimes, you let kooky people stay in the game because they are more entertaining than the talented ones.

## TAURUS (April 20-May 20).

Today is a study in how it feels to want. Your appetite (for all things, not only food) is voracious. To avoid sinking into a rank mood, bring a snack for the voyage. Love with a Libra is tender.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** If you have not set your sites high enough, you realize this now. Many of you experience a bout of jealousy. Have no fear. This is the way the universe has chosen to show you your heart's desire.

## CANCER (June 22-July 22).

Don't complain; don't explain. Do talk plainly about what you intend to do, as this solidifies your approach. Romance brews in the neighborhood — it's a situation worthy of "Desperate Housewives."

## LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).

The rules of the past no longer guide you to the most appropriate course of

action. So it's time to make new rules. Don't be hasty. Observe what's really going on before you make a single decision.

## VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

Life only asks you to do your best, not the impossible. Good fortune comes via a jewel-fingered lady. If you're kind and grateful, the future holds more of this for you.

## LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

Regarding a situation that a more judicious person would deem hopeless: There's still time to turn things around. Sort out the supporters from the hangers-on. You have the ability to warm up even an icy-cold people tonight!

## SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

Your greatest investment is in yourself. Doing for others until you are all tapped out just isn't healthy. Set some time aside to focus inward. Someone is afraid of your criticism and thus keeps a low profile.

## SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

Be a social animal; networking now does wonders for your finances. However, knowing your real friends is key. A true friend accentuates your good characteristics, which can help you get work or a special date.

## CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

Social niceties are all well and good, but you're in a "show me the money" kind of mood. Or, as Dorothy Parker put it so well, "The two most beautiful words in the English language are 'check enclosed.'"

## AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

It may come to your attention that late fees and penalties have reared their ugly heads into your financial picture. Resolve, on paper, to spend wisely. Careless spending will leave you in a state of constant need.

## PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

Instead of vacillating, make decisions, and go with them. It turns out there is no right or wrong, only action and inaction. Your love life thrives when you take risks — especially if a Scorpio is involved.

Creators Syndicate

## Holiday Mathis



hangers-on. You have the ability to warm up even an icy-cold people tonight!

## Calvin and Hobbes

## Jump Start

## Zits

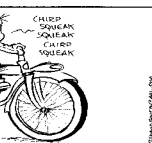
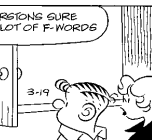
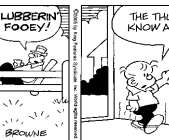
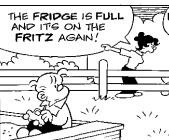
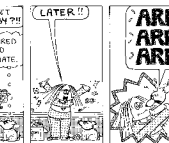
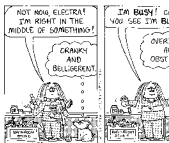
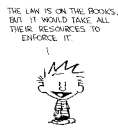
## Cathy

## Hi and Lois

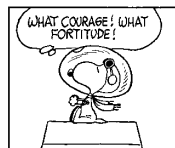
## Beetle Bailey

## Red Rover

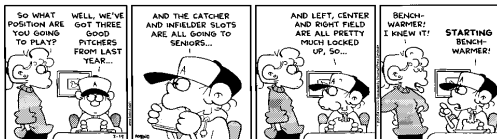
## Better or Worse



## Peanuts



Fox Trot



B.C.



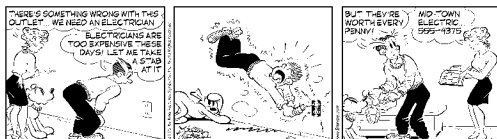
Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



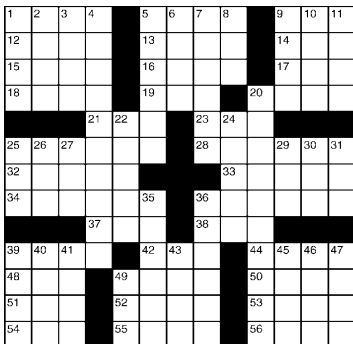
Hagar



Garfield



## Eugene Sheffer Crossword



## Across

- 1 Hand-warmer
- 5 Arthur of tennis
- 9 Honest politician
- 12 Be an 18-Across
- 13 Leeway
- 14 Put the kibosh on
- 15 Entreaty
- 16 Unruly crowds
- 17 Skater Babilonia
- 18 Lascivious looker
- 19 Compton
- or Coulter
- 20 Boxer's weapon
- 21 Craze
- 23 Praise in verse
- 25 Bicycle-seat style
- 28 Form in droplets
- 32 Remark of regret
- 33 Ohey reveille
- 34 Iota
- 36 Customer
- 37 "— the ramparts ..."
- 38 Follower (Suff.)
- 39 "Lion King" villain
- 42 Trinity member
- 44 Coasted
- 46 Scepter topper
- 49 Macadamize
- 50 Relaxation
- 51 Costa del —
- 52 Particular
- 53 Succotash bean
- 54 Have bills
- 55 Pound of poetry
- 56 Barney's pal

## Down

- 1 Look dejected
- 2 Unattractive
- 3 Take a hike
- 4 Joe Rogan's show
- 5 Fleet
- 6 Any
- 7 Rub elbows (with)
- 8 Type measures
- 9 Con
- 10 Prejudice
- 11 Labyrinth goal
- 20 End of an FDR quote
- 22 Bracelet site
- 24 Hands
- 25 Home-run hitter?
- 26 Will Smith biopic
- 27 Singer Cole
- 29 Trivial Pursuit need
- 30 Sailors' org.
- 31 Favorite
- 35 Lesser substitute
- 36 Movie industry
- 39 Medicine
- 40 "All I Wanna Do" singer Sheryl
- 41 Competent
- 43 "Awaiting reply"
- 45 Hideaway
- 46 "Woe—" of bounds
- 47 Out of
- 49 Chart format

## Answer to Previous Puzzle



## 3-19

## CRYPTOQUIP

NG KPNPHLOMP OI W AGRI  
XRWCPH OD HPWRRC  
AGGK, O DTXXGDP NFP  
XHGGI OD OM NFP  
XTNNOMA  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A WITCH WERE TRAVELING VERY FAST, DO YOU SUPPOSE SHE MIGHT BE ON A SONIC BROOM?  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals T

# Compromise with live-in boyfriend

**Dear Abby:** I'm 19, and last month I moved in with my boyfriend of five years. Ever since we got settled in our new home, he has invited his friends over on a daily basis.

It's not just one or two, Abby; he has six to nine people stopping by every day to hang out, watch movies and even eat dinner with us.

I have tried expressing to him that I'd like to be asked before these people are invited. He'll comply occasionally, but most of the time I come home and find three people lounging in our living room like they own the place. His response when I get upset is, "I pay half the rent. Can't I have my friends over?"

There are nights when I want to come home, put my feet up, and read a book in peace and quiet, or better yet, spend time just with him. How can I communicate this without making him defensive?

**—Crowded Out in Minnesota**  
**Dear Crowded:** There is a

secret to successful cohabitation. It's called *compromise*. Consideration for the other person's feelings is also helpful. Before inviting friends to come and hang out, or share a meal, your boyfriend should call and ask if that's OK with you. That's what partners

do to keep peace under their roof. Please clip this and show it to your boyfriend. It's not a question of all or nothing; it's simply common courtesy.

**Dear Abby:** My beloved mother died the first week of February. Four hours after she drew her last breath, at a lunch following our visit to the mortuary to make burial arrangements, her "friend" of more than 40 years, "Marilyn," began asking me to give her items from my mother's home.

I agreed to let her have two chairs at the time in the future. Within two days after my return home (I live in a neighboring

state), Marilyn and her husband entered Mother's home and removed two carloads of furniture — not including the two chairs. They took photographs and personal items belonging to my mother, some of which were removed from her bedroom.

I insisted they return what they took, which they claim they did, but I'll always wonder whether they returned everything. Should I report the theft to the authorities or to the other family members? Should I demand an accounting from the so-called friends?

**—Angry and Heart sick**  
**in Sun City**

**Dear Abby and Heart sick:** By all means disclose what happened not only to your other family members, but also to your mother's lawyer and the police. The lawyer can demand the accounting, and the police can make sure that all the items were indeed returned.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69406, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.ueppress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

## JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FITBE	_____
HOPNY	_____
VIRQUE	_____
BEDFAL	_____

**Answer here:** \_\_\_\_\_ **HIM**

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ABBOT STEED HORROR FROZEN

Answer: How the drunken cowboy fell when the sheriff put him in the cooler — NOT SO HOT

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argilione



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

# Coughing neighbor too noisy

**Dear Annie:** My husband and I have a unique problem with one of our neighbors. We would talk to him about it, but it's quite embarrassing.

Every night between 2 and 4 a.m., our neighbor goes outside and coughs until he spits up. And every night, it wakes us up. It is so disgusting.

This neighbor is a heavy smoker. We have tried closing our windows, but we can still hear him. We are sure he does this outside so he won't wake up his own family. Instead, we are the ones losing sleep.

How do we deal with this situation tactfully?

**—Sleepless in Sarasota**

**Dear Sarasota:** You have two options. Tell your neighbor, "You probably aren't aware of it, but your coughing wakes us up at night. We're terribly worried about you."

## Annie's Mailbox



The second option is to put some white noise in your bedroom — perhaps a fan, a radio, or one of those machines that simulates ocean waves — to mask the unpleasant sound.

**Dear Annie:** I read the letter from "A Troubled Father," who was upset that his adult

daughter didn't send birthday cards to his new wife, although she did finally send a Mother's Day card.

My father, also a widower, remarried a lovely woman, and we are very appreciative. However, my father decided we could not spend time with him alone, that every visit had to include his new wife. This was never a problem when my mother was alive. We siblings used to meet Dad alone for breakfast, and it was a great opportunity to discuss things.

Now breakfasts always include the new wife, and most of the time is spent listening to my stepmother.

Mother's Day is always a problem, since he expects us to shower her with the same devotion that we gave my mother. Why? She's not my mother. She is HIS WIFE. He should stop trying to force a relationship on his children that they will resent.

**—Frustrated Stepdaughter**

**Dear Frustrated:** Many new wives are insecure about their place in the family and go overboard to make sure Hubby includes them in everything. This can create terrible bitterness. A secure woman knows that her husband loves her, and she doesn't mind letting him have breakfast with his kids, alone.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to [anniesmailbox@comcast.net](mailto:anniesmailbox@comcast.net), or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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## Family Circus



3-19  
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www.familycircus.com

**"Mommy! Winter's over! The sidewalks are coming back!"**

## GRAFFITI



Dennis the Menace



The Far Side



Duggy's science project gets in Mr. Og's hair.

Non Sequitur



WHEN IT HAS AN ADVANTAGE TO HAVE ADULT ADD.

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## SCOREBOARD

## AFTN\* &amp; Radio

## Saturday

**AFN-Pacific, 6 p.m.-Boxing:** Friday Night Lights (Marty McBride (34-4), 20 KO) vs. Donny (16-1), 12 KO), heavyweight (7) (G).

**AFN-Atlantic and Sports, 7 p.m.-College basketball:** NCAA men's tournament, 2nd round, Tuesday TBS.

**AFN-Radio, 7 p.m.-College basketball:** NCAA men's tournament, 2nd-round doubleheader, teams TBD.

## Sunday

**AFN-Pacific, 1 p.m.-Auto racing:** Busch Series (No. 14) vs. No. 15, 12 KO), 12 KO), 12 KO).

**AFN-Radio, 2 p.m.-College basketball:** NCAA men's tournament, 2nd-round tripleheader, teams TBD.

**AFN-Atlantic, 6 p.m.-Tennis:** Pacific Life Open, women's final (G).

**AFN-Sports, 9 p.m.-Off-road:** Bill Invitational, 3rd round (G).

**AFN-Pacific, 1 p.m.-Auto racing:** RLX Satellite Radio Indy (20) (G).

**AFN-Pacific and Pacific, 6 p.m.-College basketball:** NCAA men's tournament, 2nd round, Tuesday TBS.

**AFN-Radio, 6 p.m.-College basketball:** NCAA men's tournament, 2nd-round tripleheader, teams TBD.

**AFN-Atlantic, 6 p.m.-Auto racing:** Nextel Go! Golden Coast 500.

**AFN-Pacific, 11 p.m.-Auto racing:** NHRA Mac Tools Nationals.

All times are Central European Time. All times are delayed unless otherwise indicated. All times are subject to change. Visit [www.azn.net](http://www.azn.net) for more information.

## Baseball

## Spring training games

AMERICAN LEAGUE			
	W	L	Pct.
Tampa Bay	8	5	.615
Los Angeles	10	7	.588
Toronto	8	5	.583
Cleveland	8	6	.571
Chicago	8	8	.500
Detroit	6	6	.500
Baltimore	6	7	.461
Boston	6	7	.461
New York	6	7	.461
Kansas City	6	8	.429
Minnesota	6	8	.429
Oakland	6	10	.375
Texas	6	10	.375



## SCOREBOARD

## SCOREBOARD, FROM PAGE 28

## Golf

## Supersession International

Thursday  
Safeway Mountain Golf Club  
Supersession Mountain, 72 (36-36)  
Par 72  
Yardage: 6,620 Par: 72  
First Round  
a-mateur

Slew-A-Li	33-65	-7
Lorena Cochran	34-61	-5
Christina Kim	35-60	-4
Jan Inkster	35-60	-6
Karen Staples	35-67	-5
Sung Ah Yim	35-68	-5
Soo-Yun Kang	35-68	-4
Maura Dunn	35-69	-4
Karrie Webb	35-69	-4
Dawn Coe-Jones	35-69	-3
Candice Kung	35-69	-3
Boeth Daniel	36-69	-3
Paula Creamer	36-69	-3
Julia Eger	36-69	-3
Michelle McCann	36-69	-3
Kimberly Rasmussen	36-69	-3
Soo Young Moon	36-69	-3
Julia Eger	36-69	-3
Reilly Rankin	36-69	-3
Hana Kim	36-69	-3
Sully Little	36-69	-3
Li Wen-tai, Taiwan	36-69	-3
Lin Keng-chi, Taiwan	36-69	-3
Thomas Brann, Denmark	36-69	-3
Terry Pilakandis, Mexico	36-69	-3
Paul Mogniey, Ireland	36-69	-3
Michael Campbell, New Zealand	36-69	-3
Edward Low, United States	36-69	-3
Chawatt Piatto, Thailand	36-69	-3
Lin Wen-tai, Taiwan	36-69	-3
Steven Jefferies, Sweden	36-69	-3
Ross Bain, Scotland	36-69	-3
Shinwoo Kang, South Korea	36-69	-3
Mo Joong-kyung, South Korea	36-69	-3
Chang-Ho Park, Thailand	36-69	-3
Simon Yates, England	36-69	-3
Stuart Little, England	36-69	-3
Keith Horne, South Africa	36-69	-3
Ramchandani, India	36-69	-3
Chang Tse-peng, Taiwan	36-69	-3
Gregory Bourdy, France	36-69	-3
David Brandson, Australia	36-69	-3
Steven O'Hara, Scotland	36-69	-3
Pablo del Olmo, Mexico	36-69	-3
Gregory Bourdy, France	36-69	-3
Frederik Buhlmann, South Africa	36-69	-3
Nicolas Collor, Brazil	36-69	-3
Frederik Buhlmann, Sweden	36-69	-3
Ted O'Connell, Ireland	36-69	-3
Cory Harris, United States	36-69	-3
Daniel Vancini, Argentina	36-69	-3

## TCL Classic

## Friday

## At Yalung Bay Golf Club

## Sanya, China

## Par 72

## Second 54 holes

## Yardage: 7,075 Par: 72

## First Round

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## Deals

## Thursday's transactions

## BASEBALL

## American League

## KANSAS CITY ROYALS—Assigned Of Brian

## HARRIS, LHP, to Los Angeles Angels

## LOS ANGELES ANGELS—Assigned, q/p

## Steven Shell, LHP, to Los Angeles Angels

## QHP, LHP, Corey Lee, INF, Howard Kendrick, OF

## to Los Angeles Angels

## REGGIE WILLYE to his minor league camp

## TORONTO BLUE JAYS—Released RHP Billy

## Kane

## NATIONAL LEAGUE

## LOS ANGELES DODGERS—Options INF

## Willy Aybar, INF, Brian Myers, RHP, Francisco

## Lirio, and Russell Martin to their minor

## league camp

## NEW YORK METS—Released INF Danny Garcia

## and RHP Matt McEwing to their minor

## league camp

## PAGAN, OF, and RHP Matt Lindstrom to their minor

## league camp

## Assigned LHP Blake Mitchell and RHP

## Juan Padilla to their minor league

## camps

## WASHINGTON NATIONALS—Assigned RHP

## Sun-jong Kim to their minor league camp

## BASEBALL

## National Football Association

## CLEVELAND CAVALIERS—Fined coach Paul

## Silas \$100,000 for a derogatory comment

## about Utah's Carlos Boozer

## ORLANDO MAGIC—Fired Johnny Dawkins

## coach

## FOOTBALL

## National Football League

## CHICAGO BEARS—Agreed to terms with

## DEBBY HARRIS, LHP, to Los Angeles Angels

## GREEN BAY PACKERS—Signed G Adrian

## Klemmer, LHP, to Los Angeles Angels

## HOUSTON TEXANS—Signed QB Tony

## Stewart, LHP, to Los Angeles Angels

## KANSAS CITY CHIEFS—Agreed to terms

## with Carl Peterson, president, on a four-year

## contract extension

## MIAMI DOLPHINS—Signed RHP Heath Evans

## and RHP Heath Evans

## SAN DIEGO CHARGERS—Signed G Kris

## Fisher to a one-year contract

## ST. LOUIS RAMS—Signed G Kris

## Fisher to a one-year contract

## AMSTERDAM ATL ETUPE—Acquired DB

## Sam Massey from Berlin for Chris Fren-

## LICH

## REIN FIER—Signed WR Gustavo Teles

## ALBANY, N.Y.—Named Jan Brown assistant

## coach

## WASHINGTON—Agreed to terms with

## Lorenzo Roman, men's basketball coach, on

## an eight-year contract extension

## WINSTON-SALEM STATE—Agreed to terms

## with John Williams, women's basketball

## coach, on a three-year contract extension



Miami Heat's Shaquille O'Neal (32) tries to shoot over Los Angeles Lakers' Lamar Odom (7) Thursday night in Miami. Miami won 102-89.

# O'Neal's heat defeat Brant, Lakers again

The Associated Press

MIAMI — The message came loud and clear, 35 seconds into the second half: Kobe Bryant leaped toward the basket, shot the basketball — and landed on his backside, his shot blocked by Dwyane Wade.

It was a harbinger of what awaited Bryant and the Los Angeles Lakers over the last two quarters.

Bryant missed his first nine shots of the second half, and Wade and Koryn Dooling kept a big fourth quarter that gave the Miami Heat a 102-89 victory Thursday night — and let Shaquille O'Neal enjoy a season sweep of his former team.

Wade had 27 points, O'Neal had 25 points and 12 rebounds and Dooling scored a season-high 17 for Miami (51-16), which won its 11th straight game and season record 14th straight at home.

The Heat are nine games ahead of Detroit in the Eastern Conference race, 13½ games ahead of Washington in the Southeast Division — with 15 regular-season games remaining and within perimeter points of San Antonio (49-15) for the league's best record.

"We just look at this game as another game," O'Neal said. "We wanted to stay focused and our guys did a beautiful job of not letting anything enter into the locker room that would break our focus."

Something Bryant said just before halftime, actually raised Wade's level of focus.

Bryant, according to Wade, told Miami's second-year guard "Stop crying" as the teams were about to enter the locker room following a first half in which Wade was often agitated over non-calls.

## NBA scoreboard

## Eastern Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
xv-Miami	51	16	.761	
x-Detroit	40	23	.636	9
x-Boston	39	25	.609	14
x-Washington	36	28	.563	19
Chicago	34	34	.500	24
Cleveland	34	34	.500	24
Indiana	30	38	.438	29
Orlando	17	51	.250	34
Philadelphia	31	33	.484	18½
New Jersey	29	35	.446	21
Toronto	27	37	.423	22½
New York	26	39	.400	24
Milwaukee	26	39	.400	24
Charlotte	17	50	.250	31
Denver	19	52	.264	32½

## Western Conference

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-San Antonio	49	15	.766	
x-Phoenix	42	22	.657	1½
x-Seattle	40	23	.636	3
Utah	37	26	.588	6
Houston	35	29	.545	9
Sacramento	30	34	.469	14
Memphis	27	37	.423	17
San Diego	19	52	.264	24
Minnesota	33	33	.500	17
L.A. Lakers	32	33	.500	17
L.A. Clippers	29	35	.446	20
Portland	29	35	.446	20
Golden State	24	40	.375	25
New Orleans	20	44	.313	30

## x=clinched playoff spot

## Miami 102-89 Heat

## Golden State 97-89 Sacramento 97

## Thursday's games

## New York at Atlanta

## L.A. Lakers at Indiana

## Philadelphia at Cleveland

## Toronto at Detroit

## Boston at Houston

## Washington at Milwaukee

## Milwaukee at Denver

## L.A. Clippers at Denver

## Orlando at Seattle

## Utah at Washington

## Chicago at Philadelphia

## New York at Miami

## New Orleans at Charlotte

## Charlotte at Dallas

## Orlando at Portland

## Sacramento at L.A. Clippers

## Cleveland at Toronto

## Chicago at Memphis

## New Jersey at Indiana

## Detroit at Detroit

## Houston at Minnesota

## Milwaukee at Denver

## Golden State at Sacramento

## Seattle at L.A. Lakers

## Portland at Phoenix

## Dallas at New Orleans

## San Antonio at Houston

## Phoenix at New York

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## San Antonio at Houston

## Phoenix at New York



## Excerpts from Thursday's hearing on steroids in Major League Baseball:



"I have never taken illegal performance-enhancing drugs. I have never injected myself or had anyone inject me with anything. I have not broken the laws of the United States or the laws of the Dominican Republic. I have been tested as recently as 2004 and I am clean." — **Sammy Sosa** of the Baltimore Orioles. His lawyer read his prepared testimony.



"Like I said before, I've never taken it. So if you want to play under the rules of the Olympics, I welcome it." — **Rafael Palmeiro** of the Baltimore Orioles, asked if stricter drug testing rules, such as those for Olympic athletes, should extend to baseball.



"What I'm hearing is that I'm the only person in the major leagues who used steroids." — **Jose Canseco**, who has acknowledged using steroids during a career in which he hit 462 home runs. He also wrote a best-selling book in which he alleged Mark McGwire and other major leaguers used steroids.



"The allegations made in that book, the attempts to smear the names of players both past and present, having been made by one who for years vehemently denied steroid use, should be seen for what they are: an attempt to make money at the expense of others." — **Boston Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling**, referring to Canseco's book.



"So that there is no misunderstanding from my perspective, I will suspend any player who tests positive for an illegal steroid. There will be no exceptions. The (players) union is aware of that and they accept it." — **Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig**.

# McGwire evasive on questions about steroids

## First player to hit 70 homers in season refuses to 'name names'; others issue denials

BY HOWARD FENDRICH AND RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a room filled with humbled heroes, Mark McGwire hemmed and hawed the most.

His voice choked with emotion, his eyes nearly filled with tears, time after time he refused to answer the question everyone wanted to know: Did he take illegal steroids when he hit a then-record 70 home runs in 1998 — or at any other time?

Asked by Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., whether he was asserting his Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself, McGwire said: "I'm not here to talk about the past. I'm here to be positive about this subject."

Asked whether use of steroids was cheating, McGwire said: "That's not for me to determine."

To a couple of other questions, all he would say is: "I'm retired."

The dark clouds over baseball rained on Big Mac, whose powerful bat once captivated the nation.

"I know that he was in anguish yesterday just being there," baseball Commissioner Bud Selig said Friday on NBC's "Today" show. "Everybody has to do what they have to do. The other players were very outspoken."

McGwire was just part of Thursday's show at the House Government Reform committee's hearing on steroids in baseball, when lawmakers repeated threatened federal legislation to govern drug testing in not just baseball, but perhaps all U.S. sports.

Five current and former players, three among the 10 leading home run hitters in history, found themselves sitting biceps-to-biceps on Capitol Hill instead of a baseball field, wearing business suits instead of uniforms, forced by subpoena to testify before Congress about whether they cheated by using steroids.

Heads turned, strobes flashed and necks craned to get a glimpse of them on a day of extraordinary theater. The players bemoaned steroids as a problem for their sport but denied the drugs are widely used.

Jose Canseco, whose best-selling book, "Juiced," drew lawmakers' attention, said anew that he used performance-enhancing drugs as a player. Baltimore Orioles teammates Sammy Sosa and Rafael Palmeiro said they haven't.

McGwire in the past has denied using steroids but under oath repeatedly declined to respond directly. Peering at lawmakers over reading glasses, his goatee flecked with gray, McGwire was pressed to say whether he had taken performance-enhancing substances or whether he could provide details about use by other players. Over and over, he said he would not respond.

All of the players offered condolences to the parents of two young baseball players who committed suicide after using steroids.

The parents testified, too, along with medical experts who talked about the health risks of steroids.

"Players that are guilty of taking steroids are not only cheaters — you are cowards," said Donald Hooton of



**Mark McGwire, who broke Rogers Maris' season record of 61 home runs when he hit 70 in 1998, said, "I'm not here to talk about the past. I'm here to be positive about this subject" during a hearing on Capitol Hill on Thursday.**

Plano, Texas, whose son, Taylor, was 17 when he hanged himself in July 2003.

During a hearing that lasted 11½ hours, lawmakers questioned baseball's new drug-testing plan, including a provision allowing for fines instead of suspensions. A first offense could cost 10 days out of a six-month season, or perhaps a \$10,000 fine.

"That's the best we could do in collective bargaining," Selig said. "The penalties would be much tougher if I had my way."

He added that he would suspend anyone who fails a test, vowing, "There will be no exceptions."

Canseco's book included claims that he injected McG-

wire with steroids when they were teammates with the Oakland Athletics and that Palmeiro used the drugs. In a tense scene, they sat at the same table, never directly addressing each other. During a break, Canseco was left out while the other players huddled.

"Steroids were part of the game, and I don't think anybody really wanted to take a stance on it," Canseco said.

If Congress does nothing about this issue, it will go on forever."

Several congressmen gushed about the sport, recalling how as children they collected baseball cards and autographs and looked up to players. For the most part, members of the committee appeared deferential and unwilling to press the players, saving their harshest criticism for baseball officials.

"Why should we believe that the baseball commissioner and the baseball union will want to do something when we have a 30-year record of them not responding to this problem?" asked Rep. Henry Waxman of California, the committee's ranking Democrat.

The paneled hearing room was full when the players appeared, with camera crews lining the walls and clogging the aisles. Much of the crowd cleared out when the players left, leaving empty seats for Selig's testimony.

He said the extent of steroids in baseball had been blown out of proportion.

"Did we have a major problem? No," Selig said. "Let me say this to you: There is no concrete evidence of that, there is no testing evidence, there is no other kind of evidence."

Questions about steroids have intensified as home runs have increased. McGwire and Sosa were widely credited with helping restore baseball's popularity in 1998 when they chased Rogers Maris' season record of 61 homers. McGwire's mark lasted only three seasons before San Francisco's Barry Bonds hit 73.

Bonds and the New York Yankees' Jason Giambi were not called to the hearing. Both testified in 2003 to a grand jury investigating a steroid-distribution ring, and there were concerns testimony to Congress could hinder the probe.

Boston pitcher Curt Schilling, a vocal critic of steroid use, sat at one end of the witness table, with Canseco at the other. Palmeiro, Sosa and McGwire were in between.

Schilling took a shot at Canseco, saying claims in the former slugger's book "should be seen for what they are: an attempt to make money at the expense of others." He even called him a "liar."

But Schilling backtracked from his earlier claims of rampant steroid use, saying, "The issue was grossly overstated by people, including myself."

While boosting strength, steroids also can lead to dramatic mood swings, heart disease, cancer, sterility and depression, among other risks, and a doctor's prescription for medical purposes has been illegal since 1991.

Baseball banned steroids in September 2002 and began testing for them with penalties in 2004. Several congressmen pointed out that other major U.S. sports leagues have stricter policies and suggested legislation might be needed to make the testing uniform.

# Giambi works out, doesn't tune in test

The Associated Press

Jason Giambi lifted weights instead of watching his fellow players weather questions about steroids during Thursday's congressional hearing.

The New York Yankees slugger woke up at 10 a.m. — the same time testimony began in front of the House Government Reform Committee in Washington — and went straight to the gym at the team's facility in Tampa, Fla.

"I haven't kept up with it," Giambi said. "I wanted to get my workout in."

Giambi testified in 2003 to a San Francisco grand jury investigating a steroid-distribution ring and was excused on Tuesday from making the trip to Washington. The San Francisco Chronicle reported in December that he acknowledged using steroids.

Yankees owner George Steinbrenner said he watched highlights of the hearings on the TV while having dinner.

Asked if it was a bad day for baseball, Steinbrenner said: "Not a good one so far."

San Diego pitcher Adam Eaton, the team's players representative, did watch and wasn't impressed with the legislators' questioning.

"I think now that everybody's had their say, to some degree, it

## Spring training

sounds like everyone is spinning their wheels, just passing time," Eaton said. "There's nothing coming out of this other than the attention, obviously."

Jose Canseco, Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa, Rafael Palmeiro and Curt Schilling were asked whether baseball should adapt two-year bans for first-time violations, similar to Olympic policy.

"I think we're kind of jumping the gun a little bit on saying we should go to the extreme of the Olympic two-year ban," Eaton said. "Obviously if they get caught a second time it's a lifetime ban. We're in an entertaining business. The Olympics are put up on a pedestal of purity."

Nearly all of the spring training docket in Florida was rained out on Thursday. The unexpected downtime didn't entice other players to watch the hearings, though.

"I didn't have the TV on today," Yankees pitcher Mike Mussina said. "I don't know what's going to come out of it. Whether I watch, it or I don't doesn't change what's happening there."

About 10 members of the Boston Red Sox were in their clubhouse when the hearing started



**Chicago Cubs right-hander Greg Maddux works against the Oakland Athletics on Thursday in Phoenix. Maddux won his first game of spring training.**

and none were watching even though it was on the TV. Some were eating, others filling out NCAA brackets, others reading the newspaper.

At least one player used the day off to watch. In a crowded New York Mets clubhouse, Mike Piazza — an avid viewer of C-SPAN — caught a few moments of the video hearings and said he was interested in watching future talks.

"Piazza feels the issue is the 'olive branch' between the players' union and management, and that he hopes the negative attention doesn't tarnish the sport with fans."

"I hope what's not diminished

is the perception of the skill it takes to hit a 95 mile-per-hour fastball or throw a no-pitcher," he said.

In exhibition games:

**Giants 7, Rangers 5:** At Surprise, Ariz., Kenny Rogers, coming off a career-high 18 victories last season, gave up six runs and 10 hits in 3½ innings for the Rangers. Rogers, who had pitched just once this spring, gave up a run in one inning when he started the opener March 3 against Kansas City.

**Cubs 6, Athletics 4:** At Phoenix, Greg Maddux picked up his first victory of the spring despite allowing four runs and seven hits with a walk and four strikeouts in five innings. Before the game, Cubs manager Dusty Baker suggested Maddux is a strong possibility to start on Opening Day, with Mark Prior and Kerry Wood sidelined by injuries.

**Padres 16, Rockies (ss) 7:** At Peoria, Ariz., it was quite a feat for Ryan Klesko and Eric Young. Klesko looked like his former self, driving in six of San Diego's first seven runs with two homers and a single.

Young, signed by the Padres as a free agent in December, got to play in the same game with his 19-year-old son, Eric Jr., a Rockies farmhand brought up specifi-

cally for this game to play second base against his father's team.

**Royals 5, Angels 3:** At Tempe, Ariz., Mike Sweeney had three hits and Emilio Brown drove in two runs to lead Kansas City past Los Angeles.

Brown and Eli Marrero had two hits apiece and Angel Berroa homered for Kansas City, which finished with 14 hits. Steve Finley had two hits and two RBIs for the Angels.

**Diamondbacks (ss) 13, Brewers 10:** At Tucson, Ariz., Alan Zinter hit a three-run homer in the bottom of the 10th inning for the Arizona split squad.

Troy Glaus was 2-for-3 with a double, homer and four RBIs. The Diamondbacks' new third baseman is 10-for-21 — a .476 average — with five extra-base hits and 12 RBIs in nine games.

The Diamondbacks finished with 19 hits, Milwaukee 17.

**Diamondbacks (ss) 5, Rockies (ss) 3:** At Tucson, Ariz., Chad Tracy had two hits and three RBIs and Michael Goshling pitched four scoreless innings to lead Arizona in a matchup of split-squad teams.

**Devil Rays 7, Phillies 3:** At Clearwater, Fla., Orlando Hernandez had two hits and Jason Phelps, Shane Halter and Jaron Pridie had three hits apiece for Tampa Bay.

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## McGwire faces questioning like figdety Mafia don

Jim Litke



those kids believed the advice from coaches and scouts "to get bigger" meant by any means necessary, including the reckless use of steroids.

Then a few of those players who got bigger and better as they got older took the stage, and except for the disgraced but still not discredited Canseco, washed their hands of any responsibility. The voices of McGwire and Canseco cracked when discussing the fates that befell young ballplayers Rob Garibaldi and Taylor Hooton. But it wasn't long before all of those who testified — again, with the exception of Canseco — began repeating what has become baseball's mantra whenever questions about performance-enhancers arise.

"I'm not going to talk about the past," Mark McGwire replied on at least eight occasions, usually when asked about some of the most revered accomplishments in a game that's held the nation in its thrall for more than 130 years.

Though only five players and a handful of MLB executives appeared before the House Government Reform Committee, there was no mistake: All of baseball — even Barry Bonds, all the more notable by his absence — was called on the carpet.

Only one man, however, owned up.

"The most effective thing right now," former MVP and best-selling author Jose Canseco said, "is we've got to admit to certain things we've done. What I'm hearing is that I'm the only person in the major leagues who used steroids."

The hearings began with former star pitcher and current Sen. Jim Bunning saying, "maybe I'm old fashioned. I remember when players didn't get better as they got older. We all got worse."

The day continued with the anguished stories of two families who lost sons to suicide because

ball after a crippling strike four years earlier — was played "with honor and integrity."

And to the question of whether he ever used any performance-enhancers before the steroid precursor androstenedione, which an Associated Press writer noticed sitting on the top shelf of his locker in 1998.

And even to the question of whether all the home-run records of recent years should be wiped off the books.

"I'm not here," McGwire kept answering, "to go in my past."

None of the other players, save Canseco, were any more forthcoming. They saw no steroid use in the clubhouse, rarely discussed it, and never learned enough about any potential abusers to make confronting them worthwhile.

"It was as acceptable in the late '80s and the mid '90s as a cup of coffee," Canseco said.

Anybody who doubts that now should have spent a few hours in Room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

Rep. Henry Waxman recalled that he and Selig, then the owner of the Milwaukee Brewers, were likely the only two people in the room who could recall Congress' first investigation of what was called baseball's "alarming" drug problem in 1973. He then reeled off a litany of failed chances that baseball failed to capitalize on ever since.

Fans in Boston chanting "steroids, steroids" when Canseco stepped to the plate at Fenway in

1988; former commissioner Fay Vincent's unilateral policy banning, among other drugs, steroids; a string of news reports; McGwire's admission; and the steroid ban itself, with steroids in his car; and more.

"But as we know now from 30 years of history," Waxman said, "baseball failed to regulate itself."

The game's new drug policy, itself a product of pressure brought to bear in a previous congressional hearing chaired by Sen. John McCain, is full of loopholes. There are no tests for human growth hormones and amphetamines are not banned. But none of this apparently bothers fans — attendance is up across the board and it hasn't cost baseball its special place in America's sporting life. Yet.

Not so with McGwire.

The redhead whose lightning swing and 20-inch arms captivated us all shuffled out of the room at the end of the day, his accomplishments now as deflated as his once Bunyanesque frame. A few minutes earlier, a congressman had asked McGwire what message he had for the half-million kids that medical experts believe have tried steroids trying to be just like him.

Just this once, McGwire didn't hesitate to answer.

"Steroids are wrong," he said. "Do not take them. They give you nothing but false hope."

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# Players' union fighting proposals

## One plan links player costs to revenue, one does not

By IRA PODELL

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — After receiving a choice of two proposals from the NHL, the players' association went home to try to think of some better.

"We're going to do some brainstorming," union senior director Ted Saksin said.

The league and the union met for 2½ hours Thursday in New York, but only 20 minutes was spent together. It was then that the NHL presented two six-year offers: one that linked player costs to league revenues and one that didn't.

A source close to the negotiations told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity that the "de-linked" offer contained a

hard cap of \$37.5 million per team, \$5 million lower than commissioner Gary Bettman's final, nonnegotiable proposal made on Feb. 15 — the night before he called off the season.

The removal of linkage was what got the union to agree for the first time to accept a salary cap, but the sides are still nowhere near an agreeable number.

The other offer was more along the lines of what the league wants — a collective bargaining agreement with linkage to ensure "cost certainty" for its 30 clubs. In that proposal, players would be guaranteed 54 percent of league revenues, the source said.

Neither proposal really wowed the players' association.

When the players agreed to a salary cap last month, they count-

tered the league's offer of a hard cap at \$42.5 million with a soft cap of \$49 million.

"The proposals they made today were nothing new," Saksin told the AP. "It was basically a reformation — actually worse in content than ours we had previously rejected."

The NHL, however, did make some concessions. The new, non-linked offer included a minimum payroll of \$22.5 million and provided a mechanism to negotiate the cap upward if there was certain revenue success, the source said.

Both proposals included the players' offer of a 24 percent rollback on existing contracts. They also addressed issues such as the entry-level system, qualifying offers, salary arbitration, and free agency.

# Giants sign wide receiver Burress

The Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Plaxico Burress didn't let an agent stand in the way of joining the New York Giants.

The free-agent wide receiver officially joined the Giants on Friday, a week after rejecting an offer from the team. He then signed with Michael Harrison and signed with Drew Rosenhaus, who renewed negotiations.

The six-year, \$25 million contract, which expires Thursday, includes an \$8 million signing bonus, a football source told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The speedy former Pittsburgh Steelers receiver met with the Giants last week and turned down a deal similar to the one he agreed to Thursday, causing New York to pull the offer from the table.

But Burress liked the situation in New York enough to work out a deal. He now becomes Eli Manning's No. 1 receiver.

"Having the option to move around and be able to go in motion and create some one-on-one matchups, that's an opportunity that I've been waiting for," Burress said. "I believe I can go out and play at a level with some of the best receivers in this game."

Burress, 6-foot-5 and 226 pounds, will be an attractive target for Manning, who is heading into his first season as a starter.

Burress had 35 catches for 698 yards and five touchdowns last season and is a proven deep threat.

Burress spent the last five seasons in Pittsburgh after the Steelers selected him in the first round of Michigan State in 2000.

## Eagles linebacker Adams agrees to one-year deal

PHILADELPHIA — Linebacker Keith Adams agreed to a one-year contract Friday with the Eagles following a season in which his career-high 54 tackles helped Philadelphia reach the Super Bowl.

Adams also is a key player on special teams whose value rose after he played well as a starter filling in for Mark Simoneau in the playoffs.

## Sports briefs

### Steelers restructure contract, free up salary cap money

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Steelers restructured the contract of left tackle Marvel Smith on Friday to free up \$22.5 million in salary cap space.

Smith will be paid the minimum-wage base salary of \$540,000 in 2005 instead of the \$3.95 million in salary he had earned. The signing \$3.4 million was paid to Smith with this as a signing bonus.

Over the last three years, Smith has been given \$11.1 million in bonus money while making the NFL minimum in salary each year.

### Man pleads guilty to making threats in Bryant case

DENVER — A California man pleaded guilty Friday to threatening the prosecutor and the alleged victim in the rape case against Kobe Bryant.

Cedric Augustine, 38, of the Los Angeles area, could get up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Augustine pleaded guilty to making interstate threats. In exchange, federal prosecutors dropped two dozen other counts, including attempted extortion and threatening to use fire or explosives.

Augustine, who appeared to be crying at times, admitted that he called Eagle County District Attorney Mark Hurlbert in 2003 and threatened to sue him over the 20-year-old Colorado woman who accused the basketball star of rape.

The criminal charges against Bryant were dropped in September after the woman said she no longer wanted to go forward with the case. She and the Los Angeles Lakers star announced March 2 they had agreed to an undisclosed settlement in her civil suit against him.

Bryant denied assaulting the woman and said they had consensual sex.

### Cardinals' Sanders sidelined indefinitely with appendicitis

JUPIITER, Fla. — St. Louis Cardinals outfielder Reggie Sanders will be sidelined indefinitely after being diagnosed with appendicitis Thursday.

The Cardinals said Sanders, 37, was scheduled to have an appendectomy later Thursday night. The outfielder reported to camp in the morning and complained of stomach pain. He was evaluated by the team's medical staff and diagnosed with acute appendicitis.

### Sprinters Kenteris, Thanou cleared by Greek officials

ATHENS, Greece — Sprinters Kostas Kenteris and Katerina Thanou were cleared by Greek sports officials Friday of evading pre-Olympic drug tests.

The ruling by the Greek Athletics Federation came after two months of hearings into a scandal that deeply embarrassed the hosts of last summer's Athens Olympics. The sprinters had faced possible two-year bans if found guilty.

The coach, Christos Tzekos, was blamed for the athletes' missed tests and was suspended for four years. He was cleared of separate accusations of distributing banned substances.

Costas Panagopolous, head of the five-member sports panel, said the sprinters were exonerated by a 4-1 vote.

### Slutska leads in world after short program

MOSCOW — Irina Slutskaya led the short program in figure skating's world championships Friday, finishing just ahead of Sasha Cohen despite a continuing heart ailment and the stress of performing before a home crowd.

Cohen finished less than three points behind Slutskaya.

Caroline Kostner of Italy, who landed a triple-triple, was in third place heading into Saturday's final free program. Japan's Miki Ando was fourth after the short program and defending world champion Shizuka Arakawa of Japan was sixth.



Joe Ogilvie talks about his sand shot on the 18th hole during the rain-delayed Ogilvie first round of the Bay Hill Invitational in Orlando, Fla., on Friday.

# Ogilvie takes early lead in Bay Hill Invitational

The Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Joe Ogilvie started in the rain and finished in the cold, a first round in the Bay Hill Invitational that took him more than 24 hours to complete but left him atop the leader board Friday morning.

Whether he stays there won't be determined until the other 60 players finish in the afternoon in a tournament that so far has featured odd weather and strange doings on the course.

Ogilvie, coming off a playoff loss at the Honda Classic, finished with a 4-under 68 and had a one-shot lead over Graeme McDowell of Northern Ireland among the early starters. Sergio Garcia, Kenny Perry and Marc Calavecchia were among those at 2-under 70.

Tiger Woods looked as if he might be among the leaders until his 8-foot birdie putt on the 13th hole caught the right edge of the cup and spun away. He was 3 under at the time and seemingly in control. But Woods had to make a 6-footer for par on the 18th — to avoid a bogey-bogey-bogey finish. He wound up with a 71.

Ernie Els, joining Woods in the marquee group at Bay Hill, was five shots behind him after an ugly bogey on the 12th. He made up those five shots in five holes, but not before the South African was so disgusted with his putting that he flung his ball into the water on the 13th. He also shot 71.

U.S. Open champion Retief Goosen hit two balls out of bounds — one on Thursday, one on Friday — in his first round and wound up with a 78. Goosen was so sporadic that he didn't hit a par 5 in regulation until the last one, No. 16, and ended just barely.

His second shot started to roll into the water until it stopped in the wet grass.

The most bizarre moment belonged to Mark Hensby. He was 9 over for his round when he hit out of bounds on the 18th. Instead of reloading, he packed it in. The Aussie walked the rest of the hole

## Golf roundup

with Andre Stolz and Mike Weir without hitting another shot, and was disqualified for not finishing the 18th hole.

The PGA Tour has been packed with great tournaments and quality winners, although weather is emerging as a theme every bit as prominent as Woods, Phil Mickelson and Vijay Singh dominating early.

When nearly 2 inches of rain fell Thursday afternoon that suspended the first round after just three hours, it marked the sixth tour event this year where a round was halted by weather.

Worse than the rain, temperatures were in the mid-40s when the early starters returned to resume the first round.

The last time will lead to a long finish.

The 36-hole cut will not be made until Saturday afternoon.

Groupings for the final round will not be determined until late Sunday morning, and threesome will go off both tees the rest of the week.

## Sorenstam one back in Safeway International

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAIN, Ariz. — Defending champion Annika Sorenstam shot a 6-under 66 on Thursday to finish a stroke behind first-round leaders Lorena Ochoa and Si-yeh-Ai Lim in the Safeway International, while Michelle Wie was in danger of missing the cut after a 73.

Sorenstam won her 57th LPGA Tour title two weeks ago weeks ago in Mexico in her season debut, her third straight victory dating to last year. The 15-year-old Wie is coming off a second-place tie in the season-opening SBS Open in Hawaii.

Juli Inkster matched Sorenstam at 66, Karen Stapples had a 67, and Soo-Yun Kang, Sung Ah Yim and Moira Dunn shot 68s. Paula Creamer, Beth Daniel, Candie Kung, Nancy Golbs, Marcy Hart, Dawn Coates, Carrie Webb and Kim Williams had 69s.

# Orien Greene turns up when its tourney time

The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Louisville-Lafayette guard Orien Greene is making his fourth straight appearance in the NCAA tournament. More impressive is that he's done it with two schools.

Greene made his first two trips with Florida before transferring to the 13th-seeded Ragin' Cajuns, who play fourth-seeded Louisville on Friday night.

Coincidentally, Greene's old team also was sent to Nashville in the NCAA pod system even though the Cajuns are in the Albuquerque Regional, while Florida is in the Syracuse Regional.

"Oh yeah, it's pretty ironic they (are) out here like that," Greene said.

Before transferring, Greene was Florida's Mr. Basketball at Gainesville High School, played in every game for the Gators as a freshman, and started in 30 games as a sophomore.

He said he has changed since leaving Florida.

"I've grown a lot. I probably just worked out every aspect of my game and not just one or two parts, and I just go out there and try to win and play every game like it's my last," Greene said.

Greene broke his right leg at Kansas on Dec. 11 and missed six games, then returned to help the Cajuns win 14 of their last 17.

He planned to chat with some

## NCAA notes

Billy Donovan.

But Greene does have an agenda this time around with the Cajuns.

"We've been put out every time ... hopefully I can go a little bit further this year," he said.

**Some time away:** A few months ago, Bucknell coach Pat Flannery was enjoying basketball so little that he needed some time off.

"We got to a point where it just wasn't as fun as it was supposed to be," Flannery said. "I wasn't communicating with my players and my kids. ... I just hit a wall, and when I did, I got the kind of help I needed."

Flannery still attended practices but took a few games off, received counseling for stress and came back feeling rejuvenated.

"Basketball is not who I am, is what I found out," he said. "It's what I do. And that wasn't the case before."

Flannery returned to lead Bucknell to a Patriot League tournament title and a berth in the NAAs. The Bison, seeded 14th in the Syracuse Regional, play third-seeded Kansas in Oklahoma City on Friday night.

of his former teammates such as David Lee and Adrian Moss, and even Florida coach

The Bison had been on their way to an 11-game winning streak before Flannery stepped away, but players said his leave of absence made things better.

"We definitely noticed a change," guard Kevin Betten-court said. "It's tough on your team to lose your head coach for any stretch of time. It was something he needed to do and we were here to support him. When he did get back, it did bring the team closer. It made other guys step up and be leaders, and since he has been back, we have jelled better as a team."

And now that his Bison are in the NCAA tournament, what's not to like? Flannery said he's happy again and making sure to enjoy the little things.

"I'm in a whole different spot," he said.

**Left behind:** Guard Billy Edelin, a key cog in Syracuse's run to the national championship two years ago, did not accompany the team to Worcester, Mass., for its first-round game against Vermont on Friday.

Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim acknowledged that Edelin did not make the trip but would not elaborate on his absence.

Edelin was declared ineligible by the NCAA for the fall semester because he did not meet academic eligibility requirements but was granted an academic waiver petition by the NCAA in October, making him immediately eligible to play.

Although Edelin did not practice before the season and sat out the first five games because of academics, he played in 20 games and has converted more than 50 percent of his shots (34-for-67).

However, he has not played in



Minnesota coach Dan Monson, getting a pat on the head from Aaron Robinson, has weathered a stormy rebuilding process in getting the Gophers back into the NCAA tournament.

the Orange's last six games.

Edelin had been practicing with the team and was on the bench for all three of Syracuse's games in the Big East tournament in New York last week.

**Job security:** Dan Monson's job security at Minnesota was shaky at best this time last season.

Monson tuned out the critics and rumor mongers and led Minnesota into the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1999. The Gophers play Iowa State on Friday in Charlotte.

"For people to start getting off his back and start giving him a little credit is nice to see," forward Brent Lawson said.

Monson has not had an easy time in his six seasons at Minnesota. He took over as the school was reeling from an academic scandal. The scandal cost Minnesota scholarships and a reduction in recruiting privileges that made it difficult for Monson to rebuild.

He's finally done this year.

# Morgan's 21 spark UNLV win

The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Ricky Morgan scored 21 points to lead UNLV past Arizona State 89-78 in the first round of the NIT on Thursday night.

Morgan had 15 points in the first half and was 6-for-9 from the field overall, including 3-for-3 from three-point range. He was averaging 3.4 points per game coming in the game.

The Rebels (17-13) advanced to play at Santa Clara in the second round Tuesday night.

Ike Diogu had 29 points and 11 rebounds in what may have been his last game for the Sun Devils (18-14). The junior power forward added 11.

UNLV shot 59 percent from the floor (34-for-58), including 11-for-22 from three-point range.

Arizona State made 45 percent of its shots.

UNLV, which led just about the entire game, built its largest lead of the first half at 30-21. The Sun Devils then went on an 8-0 run, but the Rebels pulled away late in the half and led 48-40 at intermission.

The Sun Devils scored the first five points of the second half, but came no closer the rest of the way.

UNLV eventually built a 77-61 lead with 7:11 left, their largest lead of the game.

Greig Biffle got the other race victory and, along with Kurt Busch, Carl Edwards and Mark Martin, is part of a Roush four-some among the top nine in the driver standings.

"This penalty certainly won't affect the way we have to race against these guys in the future, because right now it looks like they're the ones to beat farther down the pole," Kurt Busch said. "So the penalty is nothing we're focusing on. They've been fast in all three races this year, and I don't see any sign of that changing."

This isn't even the first time he has found himself in the points lead because of a penalty.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. was docked 25 points for uttering a curse during a TV interview following a victory last October at Talladega.

That cost Junior the points lead and thrust Busch to the top, where he remained to the end of the season.

# Busch finds it's better to be lucky

By MIKE HARRIS

The Associated Press

**F**or Kurt Busch, last season was about being in the right place at the right time — on and off the racetrack.

So far in 2005, more of the same.

Busch, the reigning champion, is back atop the NASCAR Nextel Cup points standings heading into Sunday's race at Atlanta Motor Speedway, thanks to the sanctioning body taking 25 points away from Las Vegas race winner Jimmie Johnson after his car failed a post-race inspection.

Busch, off to a great start this season with finishes of second, third and second, went into last Sunday's race leading Johnson by five points and came away from his last runner-up finish trailing by 15 points.

The rivalry against Johnson after his Chevrolet failed the minimum height requirement put Busch back on top by 10 points.

## Racing notes

Busch said it's much too early for the points, or having the series lead, to make much of a difference.

"We're only three races into this deal, and March is way too early to talk about where you are in the points," Busch said.

"Obviously, we want to go out and earn as many points as we possibly can — that's what is important right now. It's not necessarily whether we're in first, second, third or whatever."

Based on the first three races, it appears the championship could be a season-long battle between Roush Racing and Hendrick Motorsports.

Hendrick drivers Jeff Gordon and Johnson have won two of the first three Junior the points lead and thrust Busch to the top, where he remained to the end of the season.

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## NCAA tournament: Syracuse Regional

## U.C. State hedges off Charlotte

The Associated Press

WORCESTER, Mass. — Julius Hodge earned for the longest moment of his college career in a big way.

Hodge had 19 points, nine assists and seven rebounds Friday to lead North Carolina State to a 75-63 victory over Charlotte in the first round of the Syracuse Regional.

The 10th-seeded Wolfpack (20-13) advanced to Sunday's second-round game against either defending national champion Connecticut or Central Florida.

Andrew Brackman had 16 points, Brian Evtimov and Cameron Bernerman each had 12 and Engin Atsuz 10 for the Wolfpack, who limited the 49ers (21-8) to 38 percent shooting and shut down their perimeter game in the second half. All of Bernerman's points came after the break and while he was guarding hot-shooting Brendan Plavich.

Plavich, who led the nation with nearly four three-pointers per game, was 5-for-7 from long range for 15 points in the first half but was held scoreless in the

second, missing all three of his long-range attempts. Eddie Basden and Curtis Withers each scored 15 for the seventh-seeded 49ers and E.J. Drayton had 11.

A year ago in the NCAA tournament, Hodge was in tears after fouling out in a second-round game against Vanderbilt. And, it appeared his career would end on a sour note when the 49ers shot 60 percent in the first half and couldn't miss from beyond the arc in the early going.

North Carolina State, which trailed by 14 points less than five minutes into the game, gradually fought back in the second half.

While Bernerman was frustrating Plavich, Hodge took over. Less than three minutes after scoring his 2,000th career point, Hodge converted a three-point play to pull the Wolfpack within 49-45 at 14:21.

Hodge then beat Basden, the two-time Conference USA defensive player of the year, along the baseline at 10:32 and, after Plavich threw up an airball, Bernerman hit a pull-up jumper to give the Wolfpack their first lead since

Hodge scored the first basket of the game.

The 49ers never recovered. After Withers' free throw tied the game at 59 with 4:15 left, Hodge led a 16-4 closing run. Slapping the floor with his hands and shouting encouragement at his teammates, Hodge fed Bernerman for an easy layup, nabbed an offensive rebound to set up a three-pointer from the top of the key by Evtimov, and fed Andrew Brackman for a fast-break dunk to give the Wolfpack an insurmountable 69-61 lead with 53 seconds left.

**Iowa State 64, Minnesota 53:** At Charlotte, N.C., Iowa State held Minnesota to 33 percent shooting and Curtis Stinson led a balanced attack with 18 points. Rahshon Clark and Jared Homan added 14 each for Iowa State (19-11), who got past the first round for the first time since reaching the round of eight in 2000. The next season, second seed, the Cyclones lost to 15th-seeded Hampton in the tournament opener.

That was only the beginning of

their problems. Larry Eustachy resigned as coach in 2003 after it was revealed he had parted with college students on Big 12 road trips, embarrassing the university and leaving a cloud over the program.

He was replaced by his top assistant, Wayne Morgan. In Morgan's second season, Iowa State is again back in the postseason.

Getting there took some work, however. A six-game losing streak in January left the Cyclones 0-5 in the Big 12, with games coming up against Oklahoma and Kansas. They won both, including a surprising upset of the Jayhawks at Kansas, and finished off a 10-3 record over their final 13 games to secure a No. 9 seed in the NCAA tournament.

Brent Lawson and Vincent Grier had 14 apiece for the eighth-seeded Gophers (21-11), who had their own problems in reaching the first round. In 1999 tournament, an NCAA investigation found that the school committed 21 major academic violations. Ten infractions cost coach Clem Haskins his job, scholarships were cut, and all the records between 1993-98 were erased.

## NCAA tournament: Austin Regional

## Utah overcomes UTEP, hostile crowd

The Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Call this one a road victory for Utah. Natural court. No way.

UTEP might as well have been playing at home with the raucous following from El Paso that packed McKale Center on Thursday.

With the deafening crowd against them, the Utes escaped with a 60-54 first-round NCAA tournament victory thanks to a brilliant bit of defense by Tim Drisdorn and a critical rebound by exhausted center Andrew Bogut.

Utah led 56-54 when UTEP's lightning-fast point guard, Filbert Rivers, drove the lane. Drisdorn stripped the ball away, then was fouled by Rivers. The Utah junior's two free throws made it 58-54 with 1:54 seconds to play.

"I kind of took a gamble and came up with the steal," Drisdorn said. "It was a little bit, a little defense."

Jason Williams tried to score inside, but Bogut got a piece of the ball, then saved the rebound as he crashed to the floor. Marc Jackson's two free throws with 23 of his last 25 games.

Bogut, who played all 40 minutes, had 24 points, 11 rebounds and four blocked shots, but the Australian 7-footer, who could be the Utah player to take over this year's NBA Draft if he turns pro as expected, was just 2-for-4 shooting in the second half and



Texas El-Paso's Will Kimble (52) battles Utah's Andrew Bogut for a rebound during a first-round NCAA tournament game. Utah won 60-54.

made only four of 10 free throws. He didn't have a field goal in the final 17 minutes of the game.

"When they have three guys guarding him, you're not going to get him the ball," Utah coach Ray Givoletti said.

The Utes' attempts to get the ball inside resulted in several foul ball 18 turnovers. Bryant Markson was the only other Ute in double figures with 10 points.

Omar Thomas, one of the great

stories of the tournament after overcoming a childhood in which his father and two brothers were imprisoned for murder, scored 24 in his final college game, many of the points coming on drives around the slower Bogut. Rivers added 11 points for the Miners (27-8).

The sixth-seeded Utes play Oklahoma on Saturday in the second round of the Austin Regional.

In other games Thursday:

**No. 17 Oklahoma 84, Niagara 67:** Oklahoma overcame its own uninspired play and the inspirational support Niagara gave from former star Calvin Murphy and the cancer-stricken mother of coach Joe Mihailich.

Drew Lavender led six Sooners in double figures with 17 points. The Sooners (25-7) struggled with 46 percent field-goal shooting, but were helped by solid defense that harassed the Eagles (20-10) into 16 turnovers.

Juan Mendez led the 14th-seeded Eagles with 22 points and 15 rebounds.

**Kentucky 72, Eastern Kentucky 64:** At Indianapolis, Kelenia Anzabueh and Chuck Hayes each scored 16 points and second-seeded Kentucky dominated the middle.

Kentucky (26-5) extended its record for NCAA tournament victories to 94 and improved to 37-9 in NCAA tournament openers.

Matt Witt led the Colonels (22-9) with 21 points.

After beating a rival located only 30 miles from its Lexington, Ky., campus, Kentucky now faces Cincinnati, located just 75 miles to the north.

**Cincinnati 76, Iowa 64:** Jason Maxiell had 22 points, nine rebounds, six blocked shots and two steals for Cincinnati (25-7).

With the 6-foot-7 Maxiell repeatedly swatting away shots under the basket and Iowa (21-12) unable to hit from the outside, the Bearcats limited the Hawkeyes to just one field goal and one free throw in the first 11 minutes.

Jeff Horner had 12 points for Iowa.

## Men's NCAA tournament

**OPENING ROUND**  
Tuesday, March 15  
Oakland, Mich. 75, Alabama A&M 69  
**SYRACUSE REGIONAL**

**First Round**  
Friday, March 18  
North Carolina State 75, Charlotte 63  
Connecticut (22-7) vs. C. Florida (24-8)  
Iowa State 64, Minnesota 53  
North Carolina (27-4) vs. Oakland, Mich. (13-18)  
Villanova 67, Ohio 62  
Florida 77 vs. New Mexico (26-6)  
Wisconsin (22-5) vs. Northern Iowa (21-10)

**Second Round**  
Saturday, March 19  
Connecticut/Central Florida vs. North Carolina  
North Carolina/Oakland, Mich. vs. Villanova  
Villanova/Villanova vs. Wisconsin/N.C. State  
Iowa/Kansas/Bucknell vs. Wisconsin/N.C. State

**Friday, March 25**  
North Carolina/Oakland, Mich. vs. Iowa State  
Villanova/Villanova vs. Wisconsin/N.C. State  
Connecticut/Central Florida vs. North Carolina  
Iowa/Kansas/Bucknell vs. Wisconsin/N.C. State

**Sunday, March 27**  
**CHICAGO REGIONAL**  
**First Round**  
Thursday, March 24  
Wisconsin/Milwaukee 83, Alabama 73  
Boston College/Pennsylvania 65, Nevada 61, Texas 57  
Arkansas 65, North Carolina 55  
Alabama-Birmingham 62, LSU 68  
Oklahoma State 63, Southeastern Louisiana 58  
Southern Illinois (26-7) vs. Saint Mary's, Calif. (13-18)

**Second Round**  
Friday, March 19  
Boston College vs. Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Illinois vs. Nevada  
Arkansas vs. Alabama-Birmingham  
**Sunday, March 20**  
Cincinnati vs. Southern Illinois  
Saint Mary's, Calif.

**Seminals**  
**Thursday, March 24**  
Illinois/Nevada vs. Boston College/Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Oklahoma State vs. Southern Illinois  
Saint Mary's, Calif. vs. Arizona/Alabama-Birmingham

**Saturday, March 26**  
**AUSTIN REGIONAL**  
**First Round**  
Thursday, March 17  
Kentucky 72, Eastern Kentucky 64  
Cincinnati 76, Iowa 64  
Oklahoma 84, Niagara 67  
Utah on Texas El Paso 54

**Friday, March 18**  
Syracuse (27-6) vs. Vermont (24-6)  
Michigan State (22-6) vs. Old Dominion (20-5)  
Duke (25-5) vs. Delaware State (19-13)  
Stanford (18-12) vs. Mississippi St. (22-10)

**Second Round**  
**Saturday, March 19**  
Kentucky vs. Cincinnati  
Oklahoma vs. Utah  
Syracuse/Vermont vs. Michigan State/Old Dominion  
Duke/Delaware State vs. Stanford/Mississippi State

**Seminals**  
**Friday, March 25**  
Duke/Delaware State - Stanford/Mississippi State vs. Syracuse/Vermont  
Michigan State/Old Dominion winner Kentucky-Cincinnati vs. Oklahoma-Utah

**Sunday, March 27**  
**Championship**  
**ALBUQUERQUE REGIONAL**  
**First Round**  
Thursday, March 24  
Pacific 70, Pittsburgh 71  
Wake Forest 70, Chattanooga 54  
West Virginia 65, Creighton 61  
Washington St. 60, Montana 57  
Gonzaga 74, Wyoming 66  
Texas Tech 76, UCLA 66

**Friday, March 25**  
Louisville (29-4) vs. La.-Lafayette (20-10)  
Georgia Tech (19-11) vs. George Washington (22-7)

**Second Round**  
**Saturday, March 19**  
Wake Forest vs. West Virginia  
Washington St. vs. Pacific  
Gonzaga vs. Texas Tech

**Sunday, March 20**  
Louisville/Lafayette vs. Georgia Tech  
Wake Forest/West Virginia vs. Gonzaga/Texas Tech

**Seminals**  
**Thursday, March 24**  
Washington/Pacific vs. Louisville/Wake Forest  
Georgia Tech vs. Wake Forest  
Gonzaga/Texas Tech vs. Washington/Pacific

**Friday, March 25**  
**FINAL FOUR**  
**Saturday, April 2**  
Chicago Regional champion vs. Albuquerque Regional champion vs. Syracuse Regional champion vs. Austin Regional champion  
**Sunday, April 3**  
Championship

## NCAA tournament: Chicago Region

## Wisconsin-Milwaukee runs out the Tide

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Wisconsin-Milwaukee's players didn't madly chase each other around the floor or do anything extraordinary to celebrate the biggest victory in school history.

The Panthers are above all that. This was business as usual. "We expected this," forward Joah Tucker said. "It wasn't a big surprise for us."

Wisconsin-Milwaukee, whose players were briefly barred from practicing Wednesday when they couldn't produce their student IDs, pulled off the first runner of the NCAA tournament, beating Alabama 83-73 on Thursday.

Now everyone knows the Panthers.

Tucker and Ed McCants scored 21 points apiece as Milwaukee (25-5) won its first NCAA tournament game in its second try. Two years ago, the 12th-seeded Panthers lost to Notre Dame 70-69.

The underrated Horizon League champions finished the job this time, outplaying one of the Southeastern Conference's top programs and continuing a trend of No. 12s beating No. 5s in March. That first-round matchup has produced an upset in 16 of the past 17 tournaments, the only exception being in 2000.

Kennedy Winston had 20 points and Ronald Steele 16 for the Crimson Tide (24-8), who had hoped to have another run like a year ago when they made it to the round of eight.

In other games Thursday in the Chicago Region:

**No. 1 Illinois 67, Fairleigh Dickinson 55:** At Indianapolis, the 16th-seeded Knights took to the nation's top-ranked team in the first half, trailing by only one point at halftime before succumbing after Illinois' 26-9 run that started the second half.

In the opening 20 minutes, Fairleigh Dickinson (23-10) outscored

Illinois (33-1) inside 20-10 and won the rebounding battle.

Illinois guard Dee Brown, who had a team-high 19 points, called his team's first-half performance "kind of embarrassing," especially before a huge crowd dominated by Illini orange-clad fans.

But Illinois led 58-39 with 5:14 remaining and the Knights didn't get closer than 11.

Luther Head had 13 points for Illinois, while James Augustine added 15 rebounds and 11 points. FDU won the overall rebounding battle 42-30.

Gordon Klaiber had 24 points and eight rebounds to lead FDU, which was making its fourth NCAA appearance.

**Nevada 61, Texas 57:** At Indianapolis, the Wolf Pack made an improbable comeback in the final 2 minutes, scoring the last eight points of the game in their second straight first-round victory.

The Wolf Pack (25-6), who matched Texas' shove for shove, survived a dreadful night by Western Athletic Conference player of the year Nick Fazekas. Kevin Pinkney, who had 15 points, and Fazekas accounted for more than 41 percent of Nevada's points during the season.

With Pinkney in foul trouble and Fazekas missing shots, they needed help. Mo Charlo came off the bench to score 12 points and Ramon Sessions added 11.

Illinois missed 10 shots and 3-for-14 against Texas' aggressive zone.

After center Jason Klotz and backup guard Kenny Taylor nearly rallied the Longhorns in the second half. They combined for 26 of 31 points in the last 20 minutes and helped give Texas (20-11) a 57-53 lead and 2-24 to go.

Klotz finished with a career-high 26 points, while Taylor added 22, and Brad Freeman had 14 points and 11 rebounds. Daniel Gibson, the Big 12 freshman of the year, scored just eight points.



Wisconsin-Milwaukee guard Bo Davis (24) celebrates his team's 83-73 victory Thursday over No. 5 seed Alabama.

**No. 9 Arizona 66, Utah State 53:** At Boise, Idaho, the Wildcats avoided a second straight first-round exit by rallying from a slight halftime deficit and dominating the second half.

Utah State (24-8) shot 53 percent in the field this season, but was just 8-for-30 (26.7 percent) in the second half. Arizona kept turning the misses into easy points, getting the ball inside to Channing Frye as he scored 13 of his 17 points in the second half.

Salim Stoudamire fought through asthma and scored 17 points for the Wildcats (28-6).

"We were able to cut their lead a couple of times, but they weren't going to have any of that," Utah State coach Steve Morrill said.

Jaycee Carroll led No. 14 seed Utah State with 18 points, going 5-for-10 from three-point range.

**No. 14 Boston College 85, Pennsylvania 65:** At Cleveland, the Eagles got back to playing like the team that didn't lose a game until Feb. 8.

"We were very aggressive, we made shots," said Craig Smith,

who had 15 points and 13 rebounds. "It was kind of like how we started 20-0. I definitely feel we have our swagger back."

Jared Dudley led a versatile attack with 18 points. The Eagles went 7-for-10 on three-pointers in the first half, when Penn (20-9) drew in its defense, then passed inside for easy baskets and pulled away in the second.

**No. 6 Oklahoma State 63, SE Louisiana 51:** In Oklahoma City, James On Curry made key plays down the stretch to help the second-seeded Cowboys pull away late in the game.

Curry sliced into the lane and found Ivan McFarlin cutting to the basket for a layup, and the Cowboys expanded their three-point lead in the final minutes.

Curry added a free throw, then found McFarlin for a basket inside to help Oklahoma State take a 49-43 lead. Terrence Crawford emphatically jammed home a miss by John Lucas III, and Curry hit a three-pointer.

McFarlin scored 18 points to lead the Cowboys, a Final Four team last season.

## UAB: Blazers fluster LSU

UAB, FROM BACK PAGE

gers had 21 turnovers — 12 in the first half — that led to 20 points, and had trouble controlling the ball even when UAB backed off, dribbling the ball off their feet out of bounds several times.

Cardell Johnson was particularly effective against Tack Minor, pestering LSU's point guard into seven turnovers, including two in LSU's first three possessions.

"We attacked Minor. He got cut off early in the game and when he didn't get it, kind of hurt their team," UAB's Demario Eddins said.

It sure did.

Affraid of having the ball swiped away, the Tigers had trouble getting the shots they wanted, settling for long three-pointers and forcing shots in the lane. LSU shot just 35 percent and was six of 31 on three-pointers.

Brandon Bass, the SEC's player of the year, led LSU with 25 points and 12 rebounds, but was the only player to hit more than half his shots (8-for-10). Darrel Mitchell, LSU's second-leading scorer (18.5 points per game), had two points on one of 14 shooting and missed all nine of his attempts from long range.

"They're a scrappy team," Mitchell said. "They made us turn the ball over a little bit and they got easy baskets off of it, and they capitalized on our turnover."

UAB's defense set up its quick-hit offense, leading to plenty of fast-break chances, spot-up three-pointers and open looks before the Tigers were fully setup.

The Blazers took control with a 12-2 run midway through the first half that gave them a 26-15 lead. UAB held LSU to 10-of-31 shooting in the first half and led 41-29 at halftime. It only got worse for the Tigers in the second half.

LSU started off with a turnover and fell behind 59-34 after UAB opened with a 18-5 run in the first 6 minutes. LSU made a late run to cut UAB's lead to 75-66 with just over a minute left.

## NCAA tournament: Albuquerque Region

## Top-seed Washington starts fast, holds on vs. Montana

The Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Washington has received plenty of criticism about No. 1 seed and didn't do a lot to end it Thursday after an 88-77 victory over No. 16 seed Montana.

After charging to a 19-point lead against the Grizzlies (18-13), Montana kept it closer than expected.

"We came out with a lot of intensity and rotated guys when they kept up the intensity up, but then we kind of got cool down the stretch," Washington's Brandon Roy said. "Being a No. 1 team is hard because you're thinking about it the whole game."

Roy had 17 points and The Simpsons added 15.

Montana was led by Kamarr Davis' 24 points. The Grizzlies rallied from a dismal start before fading against the Pac-10 champion.

The Huskies (28-5) face Pacific in the second round.

In other games Thursday in the Albuquerque Region:

**No. 22 Pacific 79, Pittsburgh 74:** At Boise, Idaho, Christian Martinez led Pacific with 17 points, coming back after hitting his head hard on the court in the first half and Mike Webb scored a career-high 15 — all on three-pointers — for Pacific (27-3).

"Being here last year and knowing what it takes to get a victory definitely helped this team," said David Doubly, who scored 11 of

his 17 in the second half for Pacific.

Carl Krauser scored 25 of his 27 points in the second half as the Panthers (20-9) furiously tried to make up for a dismal first half.

**No. 5 Wake Forest 70, Chattanooga 54:** At Cleveland, Chris Paul scored 20 points in his return from a one-game suspension and second-seeded Wake Forest shook off a horrible first half.

Paul added six rebounds and five assists for Wake Forest (27-5), which will face West Virginia winner in the second round.

Chris Brown scored 14 points for Chattanooga (20-11).

**West Virginia 63, Creighton 61:** At Cleveland, Tyrone Sall

blocked Nate Funk's three-point attempt, then raced downcourt for a fast-break dunk with 29 seconds to go to break a tie.

Kevin Pittsnogle had 17 points for No. 7 seed West Virginia (22-10), which gave coach John Beilein his 500th victory. Funk had 23 points for Creighton (23-11).

**No. 10 Gonzaga 74, Winthrop 64:** At Tucson, Ariz., Adam Morrison scored 27 points to lead third-seeded Gonzaga (26-4).

The loss snapped No. 14 seed Winthrop's 18-game winning streak, the longest in the nation. Gonzaga won its 13th in a row.

Neither team led by more than eight until the final minutes, and it was tied four times in the second half.

J.P. Batista added 14 points for Gonzaga, and Ronny Turiaf had 13 points and 13 rebounds. Torrell Martin scored 22 points and made six three-pointers — both career highs — for the Eagles (27-6), who are 0-5 in the NCAAAs.

Gonzaga will face Texas Tech in the second round.

**No. 24 Texas Tech 78, UCLA 66:** At Tucson, Ariz., Ronald Ross scored 28 points and sixth-seeded Texas Tech shot a season-high 62 percent from the field.

Texas Tech (21-10) improved to 2-2 in NCAA tournament games under coach Bob Knight, who is 44-23 in 27 NCAA appearances. It was only Knight's fourth victory in 12 tournament games since 1995.

## SPORTS

## UAB's pressmen flatten LSU



Wade, Shaq help Heat complete season sweep of Lakers, Page 29



LSU's Glen Davis (34) is hounded by Alabama-Birmingham's Ernest Little on Thursday. The Tigers (20-10) committed 21 turnovers, leading to 20 points for the Blazers (22-10).



## Tigers wilt under Blazers' stifling pressure defense

BY JOHN MARSHALL  
The Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Pressing, trapping and causing havoc, UAB's defense was at its frenetic best.

Yep, the Blazers could be ready for another deep run in the NCAA tournament.

Marvett McDonald had 21 points and hit five three-pointers, and 11th-seeded Alabama-Birmingham used its stingy defense to pull off another upset, knocking off Louisiana State 82-68 on Thursday night in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

"Basically, they hadn't faced pressure like we've given all year long," UAB's Donnell Taylor said. "They were kind of thinking we would come out a little weak and they'd be able to do what they want to do, but we got in those guys' grill and they were kicking the ball off their feet and throwing passes at each other's knees. We just stepped our defense up a whole lot more."

They're doing it at just the right time.

The Blazers (22-10) reached the round of 16 last year after beating Washington and top-seeded Kentucky, and seem to have that same kind of confidence after taking out the Chicago Regional's sixth seed.

Next up for UAB is third-seeded Arizona, which had trouble with No. 14 Utah State before pulling away in the second half for a 66-53 victory.

"What a defensive performance by our team," UAB coach Mike Anderson said. "I thought our guys were clicking on a lot of different cylinders. We've been playing some



pretty good basketball and now you're seeing some of the parts starting to come together."

LSU (20-10) got into the NCAA tournament with an eight-game winning streak and a one-point overtime loss to Kentucky in the SEC tournament semifinal game, but the Tigers were no match for UAB's in-your-face defense.

LSU forced things once it fell behind and

Alabama-Birmingham's Brandon Tobias (above) cheers as his 11th-seeded team topples a No. 6 seed 82-68. Louisiana State players Glen Davis (left) and Darrell Mitchell react to a delay-of-game call, one of several turnovers that led to the Tigers' 25-point deficit early in the second half.

AP photos

didn't find a rhythm offensively until it was too late, quickly ending its first trip to the NCAA tournament since 2003.

"We just didn't handle it very well," LSU coach John Brady said. "I really think some of those (turnovers) were unforced and we got tentative. Then when we didn't make a couple of shots we would normally make, I think a couple of our guys lost the confidence they had played with the last month or six weeks."

UAB's attacking defense gave the Tigers fits immediately. Using a seemingly endless bench — all 12 players saw action in the first half — the Blazers pressed the length of the floor and trapped in halfcourt sets, bounding LSU into mistakes and disrupting the flow of its offense. The Ti-

SEE UAB ON PAGE 35



**Wis.-Milwaukee topples fifth-seeded Crimson Tide; Illinois, Arizona get through tough tests**

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**Utah's clutch play in final minute subdues UTEP; Kentucky, Oklahoma march on**

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■ Washington and Wake Forest overcome sloppy halves to reach second round, Page 35

## McGwire mum on steroid use during hearing Page 30

